Redemptio memoriae

The destruction(?) and re(?)construction of Lilly Bushnell

Isabelle C B Moreton

version 2.1; 26 March 2024
version 2 originally published 22 March 2024
Redemptio memoriae originally published 13 March 2024

Please address correspondence to:

email	isabelle@severalproblems.press eigenvectrix@proton.me	(non-secure) (secure)
Facebook	/severalproblems	
Twitter	@epistemophagy	
Signal **WhatsApp**	*available on request*	

Contents

Abstract 2
Introduction 3
Methodology 5
Results and interpretation 12
Discussion 27
Conclusions 35
Notes 37
References 38

Every man has two deaths;
when he is buried in the ground,
and the last time someone says his name.

— attributed to Ernest Hemingway

Abstract

On 25 February 2024, an anarchist protester self-immolated outside the Embassy of Israel in Washington, D.C., in protest of the Zionist entity's genocide in Palestine. The protester, who later died in hospital, self-identified and was identified by media as Aaron Bushnell. Certain information published surrounding Bushnell's death by Bushnell and others caused culturally sensitive questions to be raised among some members of the transgender community. In the interest of resolving those questions, I launched an inquiry.

Based on my findings, I concluded that Bushnell may have:

- preferred to be known as Lilly;
- used she/her pronouns as well as he/him;
- been a semi-closeted trans woman or transfeminine person.[1]

The substance of these findings, the limitations of this inquiry, and the ethical questions surrounding it, are discussed.

[1] In accordance with these findings, Bushnell is referred to throughout this report as *she/her*. The neutral sense of *they/them* is not used as the available data on Bushnell's pronoun set consistently do not indicate that she used those pronouns; I took the view that using *they/them* under those conditions would contribute to the phenomenon of transfeminine degendering.

Introduction

On 25 February 2024, at approximately 13:00 local time (UTC–5, United States Eastern Standard Time), a protester self-immolated in front of the Embassy of Israel to the United States at 3514 Continental Drive, North Cleveland Park, Washington, D.C. The protester self-identified as Aaron James Bushnell (he/him). Bushnell, 24,[2] an anarchist, was employed by the United States Air Force (USAF) as a cyberdefence operations specialist with the grade of senior airman, assigned to the 531st Intelligence Support Squadron of the 70th Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) Wing[3] at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas, but as of that date residing in Akron, Ohio.[4] Before the act, Bushnell made the following statement:

I am an active-duty member of the United States Air Force, and I will no longer be complicit in genocide. I am about to engage in an extreme act of protest – but compared to what people have been experiencing in Palestine at the hands of their colonisers, it's not extreme at all.

This is what our ruling class has decided will be normal.

First responders took sixty-one (61) seconds to render aid. Bushnell was immediately transported to hospital,[5] and subsequently died there of burn injuries at 20:06 local time.[6]

Bushnell advised independent media and activist groups of the planned protest in advance,[7] and livestreamed the act using Twitch. Certain notable properties of Bushnell's public presentation and documentary legacy raised questions among my peers in the transgender community. As a result, on 26 February 2024, I began the investigation which led to this report.

About the author

While I aim to remain as objective as possible in presenting my results and conclusions, true journalistic objectivity is, in my opinion, a myth. This section is therefore provided to allow the reader to properly contextualise the content of the report.

I am Isabelle Moreton (she/her), a 29-year-old transgender (trans) woman living in Magandjin ("Brisbane, Queensland, Australia"). I am a researcher, writer, and activist. My primary project is Several Problems Press, a news and analysis service which provides coverage of trans affairs in Australia and worldwide, including weekly current events digests and case-by-case counter-disinformation work.

I never knew Bushnell or knew of her existence while she was alive, and, I assume, *vice versa*.

---

[2] (von Oldershausen, 2024)
[3] (Roza, 2024)
[4] (Stieb, 2024)
[5] (Jane, 2024)
[6] (Davies, Hermann, & Lamothe, 2024)
[7] (CrimethInc Ex-Workers' Collective, "This is what our ruling class has decided will be normal", 2024)

Context

Bushnell livestreamed her action through a Twitch account named "LillyAnarKitty".[8] Amid the global shock at the visceral and confronting nature, and fatal outcome, of Bushnell's protest, this provoked an immediate alert reaction in the trans community, particularly the transfeminine community. This was because the username was perceived as "transfeminine-coded," i.e., as connoting or signifying a transfeminine identity[9] – for reasons including, but not limited to, the fact that it contained the feminine given name Lilly. To be blunt, I, and many of my peers,[10,11,12] wondered if we might have lost a sister.

There is a reason it would matter. Trans decedents are often subjected to violence even in death;[13] there is a saying that "they call it a deadname … precisely because the people in your life bury you under it".[14] Given that reality combined with the fact that trans people face a tremendously elevated likelihood of premature death from all causes, death and the treatment of the dead occupy a little-discussed yet central position in the current consciousness and culture of the transgender community. Our perception was that if Bushnell was transfeminine, then we had a communal obligation to take care of her in death.

As the situation developed, it became clearer that Bushnell had identified herself by name, and that she had contacted several outlets and instructed at least one to use he/him pronouns.[15] However, a sense of uncertainty and unease lingered among online trans communities. I therefore determined that it would be ethically appropriate to investigate as far as I decently could in order to establish that Bushnell was, so to speak, outside our jurisdiction – or, if the data warranted it, to establish otherwise.

Regarding the title

Damnatio memoriae ("condemnation of memory") is a New Latin historiographical term referring to the systematic deletion of an individual from the historical record.

Damnatio ("condemnation") is the etymological precursor of the English word "damnation". One antonym of damnation is redemption (Latin: *redemptio*), the process of redeeming; to redeem can mean, among other things, "to liberate by force", "to restore the reputation of", and "to repair". I therefore concluded that the most appropriate name for the reversal of *damnatio memoriae* – the reconstruction of a deleted individual – would be *redemptio memoriae*. This report is named for what it sets out to do.

[8] (de Guzman, 2024)
[9] (strawberry-crocodile, 2024)
[10] (@zoesnotaposter, 2024)
[11] (Visaggio, 2024)
[12] (Phylaxis, 2024)
[13] (Rummler, 2023)
[14] (narcissus of *Immer Autonom*, personal communication, 8 March 2024)
[15] (CrimethInc Ex-Workers' Collective, "This is what our ruling class has decided will be normal", 2024)

Methodology

The scope of the review was all information which was either publicly available or expressly voluntarily provided to me which originated from any of the following sources:

1. Bushnell's documentary legacy, i.e., her publicly available social media accounts;
2. statements by individuals who knew Bushnell;
3. content published by media outlets who Bushnell contacted;
4. content published by other media outlets.

Sources

Bushnell's documentary legacy

I undertook to locate social media accounts belonging to Bushnell. Those accounts which I was able to authenticate with sufficient confidence to treat as certainly belonging to Bushnell are referred to collectively throughout this report as her "**documentary legacy**".

Mass media immediately identified 2 social media accounts as belonging to Bushnell:

- **a Twitch account,** LillyAnarKitty;
- **a Facebook account,** aaron.bushnell.94, display name "Aaron Bushnell".

Journalists identified the Twitch account as belonging to Bushnell ultimately because she identified it as such in her final communiqué. They identified the Facebook account as belonging to Bushnell because at 10:54 AM EST it posted a final announcement containing a link to the Twitch channel.[16] I accepted both identifications.

I gathered metadata from the Twitch account using two external tools:

- LolArchiver's Twitch Tools,[17] an external Twitch monitoring suite;
- Boostivy Ltd's Twitch Account Age Checker,[18] the function of which is self-explanatory.

Using both tools, I determined that:

- the account had unique ID 702206875;
- account 702206875 had been created on 28 June 2021;
- account 702206875 had had 1 previous username change, on 25 February 2023, from "acebush1" to "LillyAnarKitty";
- the total of the account's chat activity tracked by Twitch Tools consisted of 12 messages, sent on 3 channels, in the period 9 December 2023 through 5 January 2024 inclusive. In descending order of number of messages sent, the channels were:
    - djmuel – DJ Muel, a British anarchocommunist (6 messages);
    - kirachats – KiraChats, a US American leftist (5 messages);
    - sophie_frm_mars – Sophie McAllister ("Sophie From Mars"), a British trans leftist (1 message).

[16] (de Guzman, 2024)
[17] (LolArchiver, Twitch-Tools, n.d.)
[18] (Boostivy Ltd, n.d.)

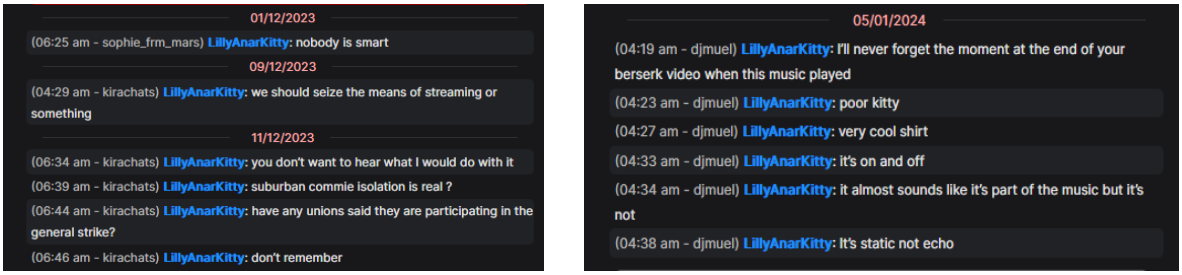

Figure 1: Bushnell's Twitch messages

Based on my analysis of the Twitch and Facebook accounts, I used multiple search engines to locate additional social media accounts belonging to Bushnell. The search engines I used were Google,[19] IDCrawl[20] and Instant Username Search.[21] The search terms I used were "Aaron Bushnell", "LillyAnarKitty", and "acebush1".

"Aaron Bushnell"

The name "Aaron Bushnell" was associated with 1 other relevant public social media account, **a LinkedIn account,** with the URL /aaron-bushnell-875897280.[22] I assessed this account as belonging to Bushnell with complete certainty because:

- the avatar was a photograph of an individual strongly resembling photographs of Bushnell provided to mass media;
- the résumé content in the body of the profile was consistent with biographical data about Bushnell provided in mass media coverage;
- the account had been memorialised by the time we became aware of it.

"acebush1"

The name "acebush1" was associated with 2 other relevant public social media accounts:

- **a reddit account,** /u/acebush1;
- **a SoundCloud account,** Acebush1.

I assessed the reddit account as belonging to Bushnell with complete certainty because:

- self-disclosures in the account's comment history were consistent with biographical data about Bushnell provided by media, and with Bushnell's LinkedIn profile;
- the account was identified and quoted as Bushnell's by the *Daily Dot*[23] and *The Intercept,*[24] among others.

I assessed the SoundCloud account as belonging to Bushnell with complete certainty because:

- the avatar appeared to be a different image of the same cat from the Facebook account's 16 December 2013 profile picture;
- the account had released 1 Track, "Read the podcast credits," 0m23s in length, on 13 August 2013,[25] which seemed to be a recording of a child or early adolescent reading a

[19] (Google LLC, Search, n.d.)
[20] (IDCrawl LLC, 2024)
[21] (Canbolat, 2024)
[22] (Bushnell, Aaron Bushnell (In remembrance), 2024)
[23] (Crimmins, 2024)
[24] (Mazurov, 2024)
[25] (Bushnell, Read the podcast credits, 2013)

script beginning, “Hello, this is Aaron Bushnell, from Orleans, Cape Cod, Massachusetts [...]”.

“LillyAnarKitty”

The name “LillyAnarKitty” was associated with 2 other relevant public social media accounts:

- **a YouTube channel,** ID UCL5p7u6wfBh74cYgcHnBrSA, with the username @LillyAnarKitty and the display name “Lilly”,[26] created no later than 04:59:02 UTC 27 July 2022, when it was first crawled by the Wayback Machine;[27]
- **a Mastodon account,** with the username @lillyanarkitty@kolektiva.social and the display name “Lilly”, created 22 December 2022.[28]

I assessed the Mastodon account as belonging to Bushnell with complete certainty because:

- the name could not have been opportunistically hijacked – due to design limitations in the server software, Mastodon accounts cannot change usernames,[29] so the account could not have acquired that username later than its join date, 22 December 2022;
- the profile picture was identical to the SoundCloud account’s profile picture;
- on 23 December 2022, *circa* 1 day after the account was registered, Bushnell’s reddit account posted a comment asking for advice on using Mastodon;[30]
- Kolektiva, the instance on which the account is registered, was at the time of registration (and nominally remains) a hub for anarchists,[31] consistent with Bushnell’s professed politics and interactions elsewhere;
- the account’s sparse activity, 4 replies, consisted entirely of interactions with Sophie McAllister (@sophiefrommars@octodon.social), consistent with the behaviour of the Twitch account.

I assessed the YouTube account as belonging to Bushnell with complete certainty because:

- the channel had had the same display name and avatar at every Internet Archive crawl since the initial crawl of the URL with that channel ID on 27 July 2022;
- the channel’s avatar was identical to that of the Mastodon and SoundCloud accounts;
- the account’s only documented interaction was with DJ Muel,[32] consistent with the behaviour of the Twitch account.

[26] (Bushnell, Lilly [YouTube], 2022)
[27] (Bushnell, Lilly [YouTube, archived], 2022)
[28] (Bushnell, Lilly [Kolektiva], 2022)
[29] (Praat, et al., 2024)
[30] (Bushnell, Is there a way to ..., 2022)
[31] (Hall, 2023)
[32] (DJ Muel, What can we do against monsters?, 2024)

Other accounts

There were 2 additional categories of accounts that I knew of but treated differently from the accounts mentioned above.

The first category consisted of a single account, **a Discord account.** I knew of significant documentary evidence that Bushnell used Discord,[33,34] including from Bushnell herself,[35] so I concluded with complete confidence that Bushnell did use Discord, but I did not have access to specifics from or connected to Bushnell herself that would enable me to vet images of posts allegedly made by her.

On 29 February I received 2 such images in a Tweet reply to a source request I had made. The user who published the Tweet reply has now deleted it. I inferred that they might have been asked to do so, and therefore refer to them from this point forward simply as C1 (Contributor 1). The 2 images are attached:

Figure 2

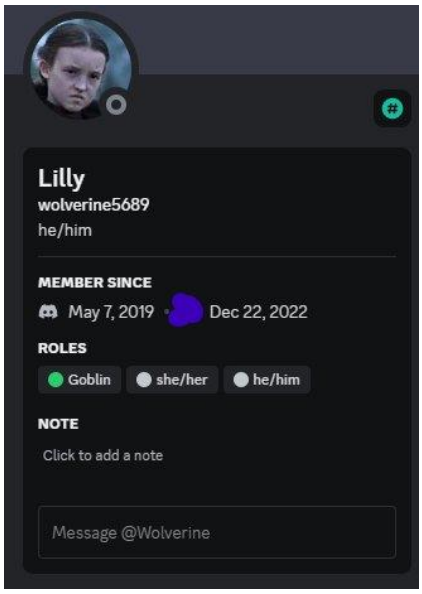

Figure 3

Given that I had no means to verify or authenticate these images, I considered whether it was appropriate to regard them as presumed authentic, and what level of evidentiary weight they ought to be afforded if that presumption was made.

The following factors either actually or potentially weighed against the images' being authentic:

- I have no other record of Bushnell using the names "wolverine5689" or "Wolverine".
- Because the links whose presence in Figure 2 was suggested were obscured, there was no way for me to verify where they led and thus use them to authenticate the message.
- Because the server identities in Figures 2 and 3 were redacted there was no way for me to verify either an individual Discord account's membership of those servers, or the publication in those servers at any time of a message consistent with the one depicted in Figure 2.

[33] (DJ Muel, What can we do against monsters?, 2024)

[34] (McAllister, 2024)

[35] (Bushnell, Same! I actually had a …, 2022)

- If the images were fabricated then whoever fabricated them could safely assume they would not be held accountable, as screen captures are not an inherently identifying medium, and I received the images through Twitter, which retains Exif data but does not republish its personally identifying components to end users.[36]

The following factors weighed in favour of the images' being authentic:

- Using the Discord client and Nerrix Solutions' Discord Lookup,[37] I was able to verify that as of 18 March, a Discord account existed with properties consistent with those attributed to Bushnell's in Figures 2 and 3. The account, which had user ID 575357189422579732,
    - had the same username, "wolverine5689";
    - had the same user display name "Wolverine";
    - had also been created on 7 May 2019, at 16:24:03 UTC;
    - had the same avatar, a still of *Game of Thrones* character Lyanna Mormont.
- The account and message had properties consistent with the fine detail of Bushnell's documentary legacy, as well as publicly available information surrounding her final 24 hours:
    - The choice of a *Game of Thrones*-themed avatar was consistent with Bushnell's reddit history, which indicated she was an at least casual fan of *A Song of Ice and Fire* and *Game of Thrones*.[38,39] However, Bushnell was not particularly vocal about her fandom in the documentary legacy, and therefore this detail would likely have required significant and unstinting effort for an unaffiliated individual to uncover by the date I saw the images.
    - The timing of the message, at 53 minutes past the hour, was consistent with the timing of Bushnell's final Facebook post, at 54 minutes past the hour.[40]
- A Discord message from Bushnell described in general terms consistent with the particulars of Figure 2 had already been attested by Daniel Baryon of Anark.[41] This meant that if the message was fabricated, providing a specific unredacted account identity and message text was a counterintuitive choice, because a knowledgeable party could immediately show it to be false or at least inconsistent with genuine instances of the same message.
- There was no conceivable motive to invest the effort necessary to create such an elaborate fabrication other than to mislead me in particular, which for obvious reasons I did not consider plausible.
- There was no evidence that C1, or anyone else, intended to mislead me, or anyone else, especially considering that I encountered them by chance, and that I approached them, rather than *vice versa*.

I decided that, on the whole, it was reasonable to presume the images were authentic. As I could not authenticate them, I decided to treat them as having roughly the same weight as other written statements I catalogued, and less weight than items from the documentary legacy that I could authenticate directly.

---

[36] (Etherington, 2019)
[37] (Nerrix Solutions, n.d.)
[38] (Bushnell, I read Riyria first, and ..., 2021)
[39] (Bushnell, I honestly learned this from ..., 2022)
[40] (Kube, Lenthang, & Siemaszko, 2024)
[41] (Baryon, 2024)

There were also **a number of other publicly visible online accounts** which were under usernames associated with Bushnell:

- accounts named acebush1 or case variants on Chess.com, Duolingo, GitHub, GitLab, Imgur, Last.fm, replit, Roblox, Scratch, Spotify, Star Citizen, Xbox, and Wattpad;
- accounts named LillyAnarKitty or case variants on Tumblr, Twitter, and the Internet Archive.

I considered that all of the acebush1 accounts plausibly or probably did belong to Bushnell for various reasons, such as having creation dates preceding Bushnell's death, having activity consistent with the documentary legacy, and so on. However, they did not contain any data which would have been material to this analysis, so I did not cite them at any point and it was therefore unnecessary to authenticate them even in the cases where it was possible.

I did not cite the Tumblr account because it contained no public content of any kind, and therefore we did not need to authenticate it for the reasons stated above.

I assessed the Internet Archive account LillyAnarKitty as most likely *not* belonging to Bushnell because:

- I could not verify that the account was created before Bushnell's self-immolation;
- the account's single – now-deleted – contribution to the Archive, the uncensored video of Bushnell's self-immolation, was uploaded on 26 February at 06:34:08 UTC (01:34:08 EST),[42] long enough after the fact that Bushnell's use of the name "LillyAnarKitty" and at least some copies of the uncensored video had both very likely already become public domain;
- the writing style utilised by the account operator in the metadata to their contribution was, in my view, inconsistent with that exhibited by Bushnell in the documentary legacy.

I took the view that **the Twitter account,** @LillyAnarKitty, created in October 2023, plausibly to probably did belong to Bushnell, given that:

- by the time I found it, its display name had been set to "Remember Aaron Bushnell"; and
- it was manually deactivated shortly thereafter,

actions for which an opportunist would have had no clear motive. However, the account had already been placed in protected mode ("locked") by the time I became aware of it, and I therefore did not recover any data material to this analysis and did not authenticate the account.

Individuals who communicated with Bushnell

I included content in this category if it originated from:

- Individuals who had been verified by other outlets as having known Bushnell, e.g., the individuals quoted in CrimethInc's "Memories of Aaron Bushnell";
- Individuals who I had independently verified had communicated with Bushnell online, in particular:
    - DJ Muel, whose Twitch community we had independently verified, using Twitch Tools, that Bushnell had participated in;

[42] (LillyAnarKitty [Internet Archive], 2024)

    - Sophie McAllister, for the same reason.
- Individuals who I had either independently verified or otherwise reasonably believed had communicated with Bushnell offline. This category included 2 contributors who, like C1, I anonymised for the purpose of this report:
    - C2, who contacted me via reddit and identified themselves as "someone who knew [Bushnell]", who I could not positively identify but who I assessed with high confidence was a leftist activist living in San Antonio when Bushnell was stationed there;
    - C3, who claimed to have been Bushnell's housemate from 2019–2020 in published posts on reddit, who I was able to positively identify with very high confidence as a specific individual, and who I assessed as plausibly to probably having been Bushnell's housemate at the time indicated.
- C1, who provided Figures 2 and 3.

Significant sources in this category included:

- "What can we do against monsters?", a public Patreon post published by DJ Muel on 29 February 2024,[43] referred to here as "Muel's statement";
- an untitled tumblr post published by Sophie McAllister on 29 February 2024,[44] referred to here as "McAllister's statement";
- CrimethInc's "Memories of Aaron Bushnell: As recounted by his friends"[45];
- Figures 2 and 3;
- personal communications and reddit comments from C2 and C3.

Media outlets who Bushnell contacted

I included content in this category if it originated from media outlets who were contacted by Bushnell on the day of her self-immolation. Ultimately, the only outlet whose content was included in this category was CrimethInc.

Other media outlets

I included legacy media coverage of the incident and of Bushnell's life in this category.

Information included

Data which qualified for inclusion in this review were performative utterances pertaining to gender – statements and actions by which, through saying or doing them, Bushnell modified the social reality around her gender. These included, e.g., endorsing a particular name, a particular set of pronouns, or a particular gender identity.

In the public discourse around Bushnell's gender as it unfolded in the immediate aftermath of her death, significant attention was drawn to "egg flags" – statements or actions which, when filtered through communal implicit knowledge, were perceived as indicating or predicting transness. For reasons of epistemic rigour and ethics, I did not include these in my review.

[43] (DJ Muel, What can we do against monsters?, 2024)
[44] (McAllister, 2024)
[45] (CrimethInc Ex-Workers' Collective, Memories of Aaron Bushnell, 2024)

Results and interpretation

I concluded that:

- there was significant evidence indicating that Bushnell:
  - used the name Lilly;
  - used she/her pronouns as well as he/him;
  - did so more plausibly to express a gender identity than for any other purpose;
  - was doing so at the time of her death;
- there was evidence contrary to these conclusions; briefly, that Bushnell:
  - repeatedly identified herself as a man or similar;
  - explicitly identified herself as "he/him" and "Aaron" on the day of her death;
  - was understood by most or all of her offline friends as a cisgender man;
- however, taken altogether, it was possible to reconcile the totality of the evidence with the conclusion that Bushnell was trans, but not the conclusion that she was cis.

Preliminary classification of identity

I noted that the accounts in Bushnell's documentary legacy exhibited differences in their core identity data (username, display name, pronouns, etc.). These differences occurred in clear patterns which allowed me to neatly separate the accounts in the documentary legacy into 2 groups. I conceived of each of these groups of accounts as a cohesive online identity. The 2 identities were:

- **Aaron,** characterised by the use of the username "acebush1" and/or the display name "Aaron Bushnell" and/or the exclusive use of "he/him" pronouns, as well as freer sharing of data related to Bushnell's offline activity;
- **Lilly,** characterised by the use of the username "LillyAnarKitty" and/or the display name "Lilly" and/or the use of "she/her" pronouns, exclusively or otherwise, as well as more restricted sharing of data related to Bushnell's offline activity.

As I understood Bushnell to have been assigned male and raised as a cis boy, every scenario of which I could conceive for the genesis of the Lilly identity assumed that it had emerged second. I thus sought to establish precisely when that had occurred. Ultimately, I determined that for the purposes of this review, **Lilly's emergence** could be said to have taken place on 27 July 2022 at 04:59:02 UTC, the earliest crawl of her YouTube account in the Wayback Machine[46] and the chronologically earliest attestation of her existence in the documentary legacy.

The manner in which the basic facts cited here were established is described below. After that point, I refer consistently to "the Aaron identity," "Aaron," etc., and "the Lilly identity," "Lilly," etc., respectively.

[46] (Bushnell, Lilly [YouTube, archived], 2022)

Supporting evidence

Bushnell used the name Lilly

Bushnell utilised the username "LillyAnarKitty" on Mastodon, Twitch, and YouTube. She also utilised the display name "Lilly" on Mastodon, YouTube, and at least 2 Discord servers. Since the name "Lilly"

- was the common element of the username "LillyAnarKitty" and the display name "Lilly";
- was used as a display name, which are customarily regarded as calling names;
    - was used as a server display name on Discord, where setting a server display name excludes the username and user display name from immediate visibility; and
- was an ordinary given name often used as a calling name,[47]

I concluded that "Lilly" was the core element of the name, and was intended as a personal name and a calling name.

Bushnell used "she/her" pronouns

McAllister's statement[48] indicated that Bushnell

> *used he and she pronouns in discord servers*

Muel's statement[49] indicated that Bushnell

> *used he/she pronouns in other discords I shared with her*

A later post by Muel on Bluesky[50] indicated that Bushnell

> *used He/She pronouns in our community. that is how she wanted to be referred and that is how i will be referring to her*

Figure 3 indicated that in the server depicted, Bushnell endorsed she/her and he/him pronouns.

Bushnell's own pronoun preference order is not currently known. This report preferentially uses she/her but uses he/him freely where it is clearer or more convenient to do so. This decision is guided by the following:

- Figure 3, in which "she/her" and "he/him" are listed in that order;
- Muel's approach, using she/her pronouns exclusively after introducing them;
- C1's approach, using she/her pronouns exclusively.

In any event, having established these two things was sufficient for me to conceptualise the "Aaron" and "Lilly" identities described on p. 12; that terminology is employed from this point forward.

[47] (Campbell, 2017)
[48] (McAllister, 2024)
[49] (DJ Muel, What can we do against monsters?, 2024)
[50] (DJ Muel, Aaron/Lilly used He/She pronouns in ..., 2024)

Bushnell did this as gender expression

I took the view that the most likely reason for someone to specify a name of address and pronouns conventionally considered inconsistent with their gender assigned at birth was to indicate and express a trans gender, i.e., a gender different from their assigned gender.

However, I, along with no small number of others, was aware that such choices might instead be part of a persona, here meaning an identity assumed for reasons other than authentically directly representing the self. Common day-to-day examples of personae include aliases and cover identities used for illegal activity, fictional characters played by actors, authorial pseudonyms, and so on. I reasoned that:

- if the Lilly identity was self-representative and transgender-expressive, she would not necessarily display behaviour meaningfully different from the Aaron identity, who, while cisgender-expressive, was still self-representative;
- personae, meanwhile, being formulated for particular use cases, would thus display characteristic features and behaviour deriving from their use case.

Therefore, I considered "Bushnell did this as gender expression" as my null hypothesis, and evaluated the plausibility of several alternative hypotheses which were either put to me or which I conceived of independently.

Null hypothesis: Gender expression

The null hypothesis had the advantage of logical parsimony and simplicity. There were also 2 statements from others that seemed to support it:

- Muel's statement[51] indicated that he understood Bushnell as "a trans person";
- C1 indicated to me that they understood Bushnell as "gender fluid". Note that while this can refer to a particular identity, it also has a broader meaning which encompasses "nonbinary", "gender questioning," etc. I interpreted it in the latter sense.

Alternative hypothesis: Cat-themed persona, gender incidental

This group of hypotheses had in common the core proposition that Bushnell adopted the persona based wholly in part on an existing cat. They differed on other details.

"Lilly is the cat's name"

This hypothesis posited that Bushnell had a cat named Lilly, and adopted her cat as the symbol of her web presence primarily out of love.

I have no trouble whatsoever believing, based on character evidence and biographical data, that Bushnell did love her cat. However,

- News media coverage appears to reflect that at, and presumably for some significant period before, the time of her death, Bushnell owned a total of 2 cats named Pumpkin and Sugar.[52] I cannot exclude the existence of another cat named Lilly at some time (for instance, perhaps an earlier cat, now deceased but remembered fondly), but have no data to suggest it.

[51] (DJ Muel, What can we do against monsters?, 2024)

[52] (von Oldershausen, 2024)

- Per Figure 3, Lilly's Discord account had a non-cat-themed username, non-cat-themed profile picture, and no other cat-related signifiers, weakening the argument that the name was specific to a persona based on her cat.

"Jorts and Jean"

This hypothesis is similar to the above hypothesis except that it proposes that Bushnell's motive in adopting one of her cats as her persona was instrumental, e.g., to facilitate political commentary or organising using an adorable animal to attract attention.

There is precedent for this in the case of Jorts and Jean, two cats living in an office in the United States, who became virally popular owing to a reddit thread depicting Jorts as catastrophically dim.[53] An individual with access to Jorts and Jean[54] created a Twitter persona based primarily on Jorts, and subsequently used it to promote trade union membership – as well as, incidentally, trans rights[55] – to broad acclaim.[56] Since Bushnell used reddit and probably used Twitter, it is plausible she was familiar with these events and took inspiration from them.

However, I could not find any evidence that the Lilly identity had been used for organising in any venue at any time; rather, it seemed to be used for ordinary social interaction pertinent to Bushnell's established interests.

I therefore concluded that there was no evidence for this hypothesis, and set it aside.

Alternative hypothesis: Privacy and security persona, name and gender incidental

This hypothesis, advanced by C2 among others, posited that Lilly in her entirety was a persona intended to allow Bushnell to publish radical commentary or engage in organising work while maintaining operational security (opsec) and/or information security (infosec) against:

- state actors, e.g., the Department of the Air Force Police, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the National Security Agency, etc.;
- non-state actors, e.g., Kiwi Farms, Proud Boys, Three Percenters, etc.

In this scenario, the name "Lilly" and the pronouns "she/her" served solely to obfuscate Bushnell's identity, and served no other function.

"Anarchists sometimes do this"

At least one discussion participant[57] asserted publicly that anarchists at least somewhat frequently assumed differently-gendered personae online for the sake of security and privacy. That participant, and other participants advancing similar hypotheses, cited as precedent the case of Emma Durruti/Will van Spronsen, an anarchist direct activist martyred on 13 July 2019 in Tacoma, Washington, while carrying out a sabotage action against a US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention centre.[58] Some explanation of that case is necessary.

Willem "Will" van Spronsen recorded music and wrote under the name of Durruti. For that reason, Durruti was later interpreted as van Spronsen's artistic pseudonym. However, Durruti referred to van Spronsen's name as her deadname[59] and released a song called "i was a girl,"[60] causing trans and trans-allied observers to initially take away the impression that van Spronsen

[53] (u/throwawayorangecat, 2021)
[54] (Morrow, 2022)
[55] (Shankar, 2022)
[56] (Hollister, 2022)
[57] (Puchalsky, 2024)
[58] (CrimethInc Ex-Workers' Collective, On Willem van Spronsen's action, 2019)
[59] (Cleary, 2022)
[60] (van Spronsen, 2019)

was a trans woman and Emma Durruti was her chosen name. The situation was later agreed to have been resolved by the intervention of a friend of van Spronsen's, Shannon McMinimee, who indicated that van Spronsen "self-identified as a cis male".[61]

I ultimately took the view that Durruti/van Spronsen's case was not persuasive for the reasons it was invoked, and was not persuasive about Bushnell's case in general, on the following grounds:

- The weight of testimony differed:
    - in Durruti/van Spronsen's case, it appears that statements from acquaintances uniformly agreed that Durruti/van Spronsen was a cis man;[62]
    - in Bushnell's case, there was a clear division in statements from acquaintances, with those who knew her offline uniformly describing her as a cis man and those who knew her online uniformly describing her as not being cis.
- Had this not been the case, Durruti/van Spronsen's case would not have substantiated the claim that anarchists often use personae with these characteristics to maintain privacy: Durruti did not maintain van Spronsen's privacy, actively identifying van Spronsen as herself by referring to "Willem van Spronsen" as her deadname.[63]
- Had the weight of testimony been the same and had Durruti been an effective privacy persona, there would still exist the problem that given the weight of contrary evidence I remain subjectively unconvinced that Durruti/van Spronsen was a cis man on the say-so of one friend, however close.
- Had the weight of testimony been the same, had Durruti been an effective privacy persona, and had I found the argument subjectively convincing, it would still have been unrigorous to treat it as evidence of a pattern of behaviour because it was a single case.

The hypothesis on its own merits

Having declined to consider the Durruti case as demonstrating an existing convention, I considered whether it was nonetheless plausible and/or likely that Bushnell used the Lilly identity for privacy and security. I ultimately determined that it was not, for 2 primary reasons:

1. there was no evidence either that Bushnell actually did perceive herself to need protection of that kind, or that she ought to have (in the latter case of which she logically might have perceived it without publicly saying so);
2. the Lilly identity was deployed in a way which would have made it unfit for that purpose regardless, which was inconsistent with Bushnell's attested competence and discipline.

Bushnell did not seem to need a privacy persona

I noted a **lack of objective need.** I previously mentioned that the Lilly accounts did not show any evidence of organising activity. They similarly did not show any evidence of radical activity. Rather, apart from some marginally politically charged but realistically innocuous Twitch chat messages per Figure 1, Lilly's activity seemed to be mostly chatter relating to Bushnell's established interests. If Bushnell or another party deleted any evidence of more radical activity then I was not able to determine that this had occurred. In short, Lilly did not show any sign of engaging in the kind of activity for which a privacy persona would objectively have been best practice.

[61] (McMinimee, 2019)
[62] (Cleary, 2022)
[63] (Raphen, 2019)

I also noted an apparent **lack of subjective need.** Bushnell participated in community defence actions, [64,65] which are inherently attended by a significant risk of identification. She was also at least somewhat open about her political views at work, even though she joked nervously on reddit about potentially losing her clearance as a result.[66] In addition, she seemed perfectly content to fedpost on main – in plainer language, she was content to promote anarchism,[67] scathingly decry American empire,[68] and excoriate the Air Force[69] on her reddit account, which was part of the Aaron identity and, by comparison to Lilly, trivially easy to link to her real name.

Put another way, Bushnell clearly had a high tolerance for putting her government name to her words and actions even when she was aware that doing so was attended by a significant risk of consequences. It is difficult to imagine content risky enough to exceed Bushnell's evident tolerance that would not also be sufficiently risky that it would be more sensible – and Bushnell was clearly sensible where opsec was concerned – to confine it entirely to private and secure contexts. For that purpose, a public-facing persona, particularly one whose name specifically identified its owner as an anarchist, would have been counterproductive.

As a privacy persona, Lilly was oddly unfit for purpose

Another factor in my assessment was that the Lilly identity was deployed in a way which would not have been particularly effective in preserving Bushnell's opsec or infosec. Given Bushnell's attested skills, competence, and discipline, it therefore did not seem plausible that she had intended it to do so.

The particulars of the background in question are relevant to this section. As of and after Lilly's initial emergence, Bushnell:

- was
    - according to her LinkedIn, a client systems specialist,[70] a role with infrastructure monitoring and oversight responsibilities including corrective security (i.e., cybersecurity incident response)[71];
    - according to the Air Force's official public confirmation of her death, a cyberdefence operations specialist,[72] a role whose responsibilities include "secur[ing], protect[ing], defend[ing], preserv[ing] ... data, networks, net-centric capabilities, and other designated systems" and which requires "knowledge ... of cyber threat vectors of servers, clients, operating systems, databases, networks and related hardware and software, cybersecurity principles ... operational risk management processes ... and specific operational impacts of lapses in cybersecurity";[73]
- was assigned to the USAF's 531st Intelligence Support Squadron, a component of the 543rd Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) Group, itself a part of the 70th ISR Wing, a signals intelligence and cryptologic operations unit;[74]

[64] (Bushnell, I was there, it was ..., 2022)
[65] (Bushnell, Solidarity from San Antonio. We ..., 2022)
[66] (Bushnell, Honestly I've been blabbing about ..., 2023)
[67] (Bushnell, I would encourage you to ..., 2022)
[68] (Bushnell, Wut? ... No place, and I ..., 2022)
[69] (Bushnell, Because they act like they ..., 2023)
[70] Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) 3D1X1.
[71] (Forever Wingman, 3D1X1, 2021)
[72] AFSC 1D7X1.
[73] (Forever Wingman, 1D7X1, n.d.)
[74] (USAF Sixteenth Air Force, n.d.)

- had a CompTIA Security+ licence, a cybersecurity qualification which "provides a global benchmark for best practices in IT network and operational security,"[75] issued December 2020; and
- demonstrated a knowledge of opsec principles specific to her radical work and the discipline to consistently apply them, e.g., by deleting Signal from her phone before her self-immolation.[76]

Given this context, it is therefore notable that the Lilly identity displayed infosec and opsec vulnerabilities which could have been exploited by both state and non-state actors. These included:

- **Shared pseudonyms.** Of the 4 Lilly accounts, the 3 readily publicly discoverable accounts (i.e., excluding only the Discord account) all utilised the username "LillyAnarKitty"; of the 3 accounts whose display names could be freely set (i.e., excluding only the Twitch account), all utilised the username "Lilly". Pseudonym reuse:
    - is suboptimal opsec praxis because it allows accounts to be easily associated across platforms. The most practical way to respond to this is by carefully planning and co-ordinating content publishing to minimise attack surface. Otherwise, a target may find themselves rudely disabused of a false sense of security concerning exactly how much information they may have freely handed to an attacker; in addition, platform-specific differences in metadata which are not accounted for or realised may allow the attacker to build up a more complete picture of a target than the target realises.
    - is suboptimal infosec praxis because it facilitates credential stuffing attacks.[77]
- **Shared avatar.** Of the discoverable Lilly accounts, 2 utilised the same photograph of her cat as the avatar. There are, at publication date, 3 Google Reverse Image Search results for that photograph; 2 are those two accounts.
    - This is suboptimal opsec praxis because even in the scenario where the accounts had not shared a username, the shared photo would have allowed an attacker to confidently link them. As they do share a username, the shared photo instead functions as confirmation of the link.
    - More crucially, the third Reverse Image Search result is Bushnell's SoundCloud, which is an Aaron account. If Lilly was intended to protect Aaron's privacy then this is a critical compromise in her capacity to do so.

It is also relevant that Bushnell appears to have explicitly demonstrated the intentionality to have avoided these vulnerabilities had she wished. If Figures 2 and 3 are accurate, Bushnell's Discord account did not exhibit either of these vulnerabilities and would not, on the data in my possession, have been more than minimally susceptible to being associated with either Lilly or Aaron. While that account did use "Lilly" as a display name, "Lilly" is a common given name (shared by, e.g., Lilly Wachowski, co-director of *The Matrix*) and was used in a non-publicly-discoverable context (in a Discord server); the account's user display name is "Wolverine", which has no apparent association with Bushnell in any other context I could locate.

The Lilly identity would also have provided poor infosec protection against both state and non-state attackers due to **platform unsuitability:** Discord, Mastodon, Twitch, and YouTube are all

[75] (Bowcut, 2024)
[76] (CrimethInc Ex-Workers' Collective, Memories of Aaron Bushnell, 2024)
[77] (Harris, 2021)

either currently ill-configured or basically ill-suited to protecting information privacy against attackers of either type:

- Of the 4 platforms, the 3 that are centralised all explicitly cooperate with United States law enforcement.[78,79,80]
    - Kolektiva is not functionally primarily a centralised platform – as a Mastodon instance, it functions primarily as a node of the fediverse, which is decentralised. However, it was always clear that Kolektiva's independence would come with corresponding limits on its capacity to resist "legal repression," as its about phlegmatically terms it,[81] and indeed Kolektiva was raided and its database copied by the FBI in May 2023, two-and-a-half months after Bushnell's final post there.[82]
- At least 2 of 4 platforms are designed in such a way that data on the platform can be transferred in bulk to archives that are disconnected from the ordinary deletion process on the platform proper:
    - Because the fediverse has no central operator, Mastodon posts cannot be reliably deleted, as it is possible to deploy malicious instances which have been modified to ignore remote deletion requests.[83]
    - Twitch chat messages can be pulled in bulk through its web application programming interface (API) by entities like LolArchiver, whose terms of use[84] and privacy policy[85] refer only to the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation[86] and the French Republic's *Loi informatique et libertés* of 1978, neither of which, to my understanding, would have protected Bushnell, who I understand to have been a sole national of the United States.
- 0 of 4 platforms offer messaging services with end-to-end encryption.
    - As with all Mastodon instances, all direct messages sent to or from Kolektiva are immediately and easily readable by the administrators of both Kolektiva and the other instance.[87]

Finally, I considered that if the Lilly identity had been intended for opsec, then it seems inconsistent with Bushnell's approach to collective security to have used it to livestream her self-immolation. Making such a shocking and highly public political statement in uniform was guaranteed to attract a significant state reaction. Doing so using an opsec persona would have diverted that attention directly onto any radicals with whom Bushnell used that persona to consort. Calling down the Eye of Sauron seems inconsistent with the character of the woman who deleted Signal from her phone "in a last act of love and affection for [her] comrades".[88]

For all those reasons, I concluded that there was minimal evidence for the privacy/security hypothesis and significant evidence against it. I therefore set it aside.

---

[78] (Discord, 2024)
[79] (Twitch, n.d.)
[80] (Google LLC, How Google handles government requests, n.d.)
[81] (@admin@kolektiva.social, About, n.d.)
[82] (@admin@kolektiva.social, 🚨 Kolektiva.social SECURITY ALERT 🚨, 2023)
[83] (Everfree, 2023)
[84] (LolArchiver, General terms and conditions, n.d.)
[85] (LolArchiver, Privacy, n.d.)
[86] (Regulation (EU) 2016/679, 2016)
[87] (Cameron, 2022)
[88] (CrimethInc Ex-Workers' Collective, Memories of Aaron Bushnell, 2024)

Bushnell was Lilly at the time of her death

It was my view that the data available were sufficient to establish that Bushnell called herself Lilly (she/her) and that she did so to express her gender. However, it was also necessary to establish *when* she did so. For instance, Lilly may have been part of a period of gender questioning, and though – I say affectionately – trans community legend would have it otherwise, that question is capable of being resolved in the negative.[89] It could be that Lilly's existence was so resolved. In that case, it would only be appropriate to conceive of Aaron Bushnell as a cisgender man and refer to him as such. It was therefore important to determine whether Bushnell was Lilly at the time of her death.

I ultimately concluded that she was, given that:

- Lilly was still present online at the time of Bushnell's death;
- Bushnell was slowly but consistently expanding her presence as Lilly;
- Bushnell was socially participating as Lilly at the time of her death.

Lilly was still present online when Bushnell died

Every platform on which Lilly either definitely did exist (Mastodon, Twitch, YouTube) or presumably existed (Discord) allows account deletion.[90,91,92,93] Had Bushnell decided Lilly was of no further relevance, he could have erased her from at minimum the clear web, and would have had a good reason to do so – in order to prevent someone like, e.g., me stumbling on his paper trail and mistaking his intent. However, she did not do so.

This does not necessarily prove anything, however. In this case, presence of evidence is not evidence of presence. Bushnell may simply have neglected to delete the accounts. It would have been uncharacteristic for someone so thoughtful and detail-aware, but nobody is the Platonic ideal of their character all the time.

Bushnell was slowly but consistently expanding her presence as Lilly

Bushnell was steadily registering new accounts as Lilly, at a frequency of approximately one every several months. Lilly's YouTube channel was registered in late July 2022; her Mastodon account was registered in December 2022, the same day she joined the server in Figure 3; her Twitter account, if indeed it was hers, was registered in October 2023. Lilly also appeared to be muscling in on Aaron's web presence, for example when Bushnell renamed her Twitch account from "acebush1" to "LillyAnarKitty" in February 2023. If Bushnell resolved the question of his gender in favour of the *status quo* then he took at least 15 months to do so. In my view the data are more consistent with her resolution to that question being otherwise.

Bushnell was participating as Lilly up to the day of her death

The last communication from Lilly I can independently verify is her final tracked Twitch chat message, sent at 04:38 UTC on 5 January 2024. If we assume she went silent at this point because Bushnell self-reconceived exclusively as Aaron (he/him), then that means Lilly existed for 17 months before being discarded approximately 7 weeks prior to Bushnell's martyrdom. This is, of course, not impossible.

---

[89] (Duck-Chong, n.d.)
[90] (Mastodon gGmbH, 2023)
[91] (Twitch Interactive, n.d.)
[92] (Google LLC, Delete or hide your YouTube channel, n.d.)
[93] (How to delete a Discord account, 2023)

I have presumed that Figure 2 is authentic. If so, then it indicates that Bushnell was participating as Lilly up to a little over 2 hours before her self-immolation. If so then it would probably be reasonable to assume that this did not radically change in the intervening time. However, as Figure 2 is only presumed authentic rather than verified authentic, it also cannot be relied upon without corroboration.

There is one other data point: that when Bushnell chose to broadcast her self-immolation, she chose to do so in a way which prominently featured Lilly's name next to her burning body. Bushnell demonstrably knew how to change her Twitch username, having done so exactly one year, to the day, prior to her death. Had she done so, it is significantly less likely that anybody would have made the connections which led me to initiate this inquiry. If Bushnell had wanted to be extremely sure of isolating Lilly from the public record, she would only have needed to register a new Twitch account and change her Discord display name, eliminating both links which led me to the rest of Lilly's legacy. She did neither.

Based on all of the above, I therefore concluded that, at the time of her self-immolation and presumably at the time of her death, Bushnell still considered herself to be Lilly.

Contrary evidence

There were, however, also several significant data points which tended to weigh against this hypothesis. Namely:

Bushnell self-identified as Aaron (he/him) in her final communiqué

Bushnell distributed her final communiqué to several outlets. Of those outlets, the one which gave the most complete description of the communiqué was CrimethInc, which explicitly indicated that Bushnell signed herself "Aaron Bushnell" and specified the pronouns "he/him" exclusively.[94]

Bushnell repeatedly self-identified as a cis man or similar

In her public posts prior to her martyrdom, Bushnell repeatedly identified herself as a cisgender man, or in other ways incompatible with either particular genders or all genders other than cisgender man. While some of these were published before Lilly's emergence, some were published after. Specific terms or phrases she used, in rough order of first occurrence, were:

- "guy" (8 April 2020,[95] 9 March 2021[96]);
- "son" (11 September 2021[97]);
- references to women as the out-group (4 December 2021,[98] 5 January 2022[99]);
- "not a woman" (8 February 2022,[100] 16 September 2022[101]);
- "male" (25 December 2021[102]);
- "cis male" (2 September 2022,[103] 4 November 2022[104]);
- "dude" (16 September 2022[105]);
- references to men as the in-group (9 November 2022,[106] 28 December 2022[107]);
- "cis man" (27 November 2022[108]);
- "not trans myself" (20 March 2023[109]).

Bushnell's friends consistently identified her as a cis man

At least 1 individual who certainly did know Bushnell offline, as well as C1 and C2, who I believe with moderate confidence and near-certainty respectively probably knew Bushnell offline, indicated they understood her as a cisgender man, as a man, as not trans, etc.

E., who was interviewed under a pseudonym by CrimethInc and described Bushnell as "one of my quickest and best friends," said in passing[110] that Bushnell was

... a straight man ...

---

[94] (CrimethInc Ex-Workers' Collective, "This is what our ruling class has decided will be normal", 2024)
[95] (Bushnell, Yup. 21 y/o guy here ..., 2020)
[96] (Bushnell, I 100% agree, it's a ..., 2021)
[97] (Bushnell, I'm the son of a ..., 2021)
[98] (Bushnell, Why do you have to ..., 2021)
[99] (Bushnell, From what I understand, women ..., 2022)
[100] (Bushnell, I'm not a woman and ..., 2022)
[101] (Bushnell, Not a woman but just ..., 2022)
[102] (Bushnell, I'm a male. Lol this ..., 2021)
[103] (Bushnell, sweats in cis male insecurity, 2022)
[104] (Bushnell, IMCMO (In My Cis Male ..., 2022)
[105] (Bushnell, I'm just reading these as ..., 2022)
[106] (Bushnell, This is misogynist bullshit. The ..., 2022)
[107] (Bushnell, I just took a dive ..., 2022)
[108] (Bushnell, I am a cis man ..., 2022)
[109] (Bushnell, Hey so I'm not the ..., 2023)
[110] (CrimethInc Ex-Workers' Collective, Memories of Aaron Bushnell, 2024)

C1, who spoke to me via reddit, identified themself to me as “someone who knew Aaron”. I assessed this as plausible because their reddit history indicated they had leftist politics and lived in San Antonio, placing them in the right milieu and location. They said Bushnell was

… not trans, but a white cis het man.

C2, who spoke publicly on reddit, identified themself as someone with whom Bushnell lived in 2019–2020. Through elements of C2’s paper trail that they could not realistically have falsified, I identified C2 as a specific individual who lived in the correct conditions, in the correct place, at the correct time for this to have been the case. I therefore assessed this as almost certainly true. They said

Was Aaron transgender or gay? No, he was not.

and, separately, that

without a scintilla of doubt, Aaron was not gay or trans. We know this with 100% certainty, and we know this beyond any question.

Reinterpretation

I considered whether these facts were sufficient to rule out the possibility that Bushnell conceived of herself as a transfeminine person named Lilly (she/her, he/him). I concluded that, on the whole, they did not. The grounds for my conclusion were as follows:

- it was possible to reconcile the totality of the evidence with the scenario where Bushnell conceived of herself as Lilly (she/her);
- on the information available, it was not possible to reconcile the totality of the evidence with the scenario where Bushnell self-conceived exclusively as Aaron (he/him).

I considered it possible to reconcile the available evidence with the scenario where Bushnell conceived of herself as Lilly (she/her) on the following grounds:

- before Lilly's emergence, Bushnell could have been an egg;
- after Lilly's emergence, Bushnell could have been many things, including closeted;
- if Bushnell was in the closet, she had a strong strategic motive to die there.

I considered that it was not possible for me to reconcile the totality of the evidence with the scenario where Bushnell self-conceived exclusively as Aaron (he/him) because I had previously been unable to show using the information available that any of the hypotheses and/or propositions which might have made this reconciliation possible were more likely than not to be true.

Before Lilly's emergence, Bushnell could have been an egg

Bushnell's cisgender identification and presentation prior to 27 July 2022 are fully consistent with her being an egg, a trans person who does not yet realise – or is in denial – that they are trans. Egg trans people are, nominally, indistinguishable from cis people of the same assigned sex.

After Lilly's emergence, Bushnell could have been many things

Bushnell's cisgender identification and presentation after 27 July 2022 but before 25 February 2024 is consistent with at least 3 scenarios, any or all of which may have happened before her death or been current at the time of it.

Evolving self-conception

As previously mentioned, I believe the most plausible interpretation of the data Bushnell left behind is that she had fully conceived of herself as Lilly (she/her, he/him) at the time of her death. This does not mean she did so from the moment Lilly first emerged. Modern Western society is cisnormative, a concept Bushnell well understood;[111] cisnormativity provides that, among other things, every member of society is assumed to be cisgender unless and until otherwise specified. Thus, egg trans people often conceive of themselves as cis people who are deviant or unusual in some way. It is possible that for some period of time, through this or some other psychological arrangement, Bushnell self-conceived both as Lilly and as a cis man even if this would have been cognitively dissonant in the context of her personal relationship to gender.

[111] (Bushnell, Love to see some visibility ..., 2022)

The closet

Another scenario is that Bushnell was simply in the closet. Trans people are at all times under significant pressure to continue presenting as their assigned gender and not to self-disclose as trans. Bushnell in particular would have been under two additional vectors of pressure that statistically even most transgender Americans do not experience:

- From December 2020 to no later through late 2023, Bushnell was stationed at Lackland AFB, in San Antonio, Texas. While San Antonio is reputedly a relatively good place for trans people by Texas standards, Texas itself is not a particularly good place for trans people. For Bushnell's entire time there, and continuing at date, the Texas government has been conducting an intensifying campaign of anti-transgender hate. By mid-2022, the Department of the Air Force was offering support, including relocation assistance, to LGBTQ+ service members in "states across America,"[112] which *them* understood to include Texas.[113] By mid-2023, Texas was trying to ban transition for adults.[114]
- Of the United States armed forces, Air Force culture is about as generally socially conservative as that of the Marines, markedly more so than that of the Army or Navy,[115] and – as Bushnell was, to her expressed anger and disappointment, acutely aware by mid-2021[116] – its culture on trans rights is no exception.

Expansive self-concept

A third and final possible scenario is that Bushnell's gender and gendered self-representation were such that she could be accurately referred to as both Lilly and Aaron and as both she/her and he/him. I saw no evidence that Bushnell used "Aaron" in circumstances where she was not at least possibly compelled to do so, but, as previously mentioned, she did use both she/her and he/him pronouns.

The implications of this scenario for our inquiry are examined in the Discussion section, below.

If she was in the closet, Bushnell had a strong strategic motive to die there

Nothing so far discussed in this article explains why Bushnell did not come out at the point of her death. Bushnell had written a will in advance,[117] indicating that she understood she would most likely die. Given she understood that, she would therefore also have understood that she no longer needed to fear any of the social or political consequences usually attendant on coming out. The horror of her death could at least have been softened by dying as herself.

I concluded that Bushnell's failure to come out was fully explicable by any one or more of three notable operational demands of her planned action, namely: standing, credibility, and clarity.

- **Standing.** A correspondent of mine has noted that Bushnell's action had the impact it did because it symbolically inflicted the horrors visited by empire upon Gaza on a member of the "endowed" class[118] – the people whose sake the whole enterprise is supposed to be for. Bu choosing to die in the guise of a cisgender white male American soldier, Bushnell situated herself as close as possible to the centre of that class, and therefore maximised the affective and political impact of her action.

---

[112] (Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs, 2022)
[113] (Riedel, 2022)
[114] (Lennard, 2023)
[115] (Swanson, 2015)
[116] (Bushnell, No. I'm really angry. I ..., 2021)
[117] (CrimethInc Ex-Workers' Collective, Memories of Aaron Bushnell, 2024)
[118] (@emoatypwarrior, 2024)

- **Credibility.** Trans women and transfeminine people – or simply transmisogyny-affected (TMA) people generally – are at a positional disadvantage when it comes to participation in American public discourse, a disadvantage from which discursive participation through self-immolation is not necessarily exempt. As marginalised women – "the women of women," as another correspondent put it – trans women are assumed emotionally volatile, or more bluntly hysterical, until proven otherwise.[119] Moreover, the commonplace social murder of trans women, coupled with a high suicide rate resulting from transmisogyny and other vectors of minority stress, helps create the perception that we are simply 'meant' to die, allowing people to become desensitised to our deaths. To summarise all of this in blunter language, the effectiveness of Bushnell's action would have been significantly diminished had it been immediately possible to represent her as simply another unhinged troon joining the forty-one percent.
- **Clarity.** Self-immolation transmits a message with great power, but cannot necessarily provide a great deal of bandwidth; "I will no longer be complicit in genocide, and also I am trans" is longer than "I will no longer be complicit in genocide". In addition, self-immolation is the most comprehensive imaginable act of self-effacement and self-denial, to the point that the name of the act is a standard metaphor for actions which embody those qualities in other contexts. Self-disclosing at the same time might have seemed to Bushnell to be contradictory or counterproductive, even if the disclosure related to the most essential qualities of herself. Had Bushnell indeed anything to disclose, foregoing her final chance to do so undeniably also deprived confused good-faith actors of a final chance to mistake her intent. It might not even have seemed like very much of a cost – why come out if you won't get to enjoy it?

As a result, I concluded that if Bushnell was one of us, she had at least 3 separate possible operational justifications for hiding it.

Taking all of the above into account, I concluded that to the extent that the contrary evidence weighed against the initial evidence, it was not sufficient to negate it.

[119] (Ussher, 2020)

Discussion

Limitations

This inquiry had several major limitations.

First, on the question of Bushnell's gender, there is currently no reason to think we will ever know for sure. Of course, posthumous outing is not unheard of, either by others (as with Bobby Brown's controversial 2016 outing of Whitney Houston as bisexual[120]) or by the decedent themselves (as with Sally Ride's coming out as lesbian in her own obituary[121]). However, Bushnell was described by her friends as circumspect about self-disclosure in general, and characterised herself as quiet.[122] Unless she left behind information which is currently being withheld from publication, a definitive answer is likely permanently beyond anyone's reach.

Second, Bushnell's documentary legacy had been extensively locked down and/or purged by the time I reached it. There is no obvious way this could have been avoided, and the effect will likely worsen with time as surviving accounts are deleted by Bushnell's friends, automatically pruned for inactivity, etc. However, this nonetheless means that there are lacunae in the data available to us relative to what would have been available while Bushnell was alive. I compensated for this to the extent possible, but whether I compensated sufficiently is, by definition, not knowable.

Third, as a private individual without an operating budget or staff, I had no capacity to proactively seek out and contact individuals who may have known more about Bushnell's gender, assuming any such individuals existed. I am not entirely convinced it would have been appropriate to do so in any case.

[120] (Tinsley, 2016)
[121] (Boyle, 2012)
[122] (Bushnell, Still quiet. Kinda proud of ..., 2020)

Questions

As the data used in this inquiry were published and publicly discussed, and certain preliminary conclusions were reached, a number of questions were raised, both about the interpretation of the results and about the ethics of conducting the inquiry itself. I answer these questions as well as I can below.

Results

Is it reasonable to interpret an online identity as representative of transgender status?

In my opinion, yes. Many trans people begin expressing their genders online.[123] This phase of self-exploration often lasts several years; I personally was intermittently self-expressing as a girl or woman online in some situations from the age of 13 until I came out at 25. The reason for this concentration of authentic gender expression in the online space is the online disinhibition effect: the phenomenon whereby people act differently online, for better[124] or worse,[125,126] because online anonymity provides freedom of action and expression which is not available offline.[127]

Many trans people gender-express exclusively online because their life circumstances prevent them from expressing themselves otherwise. Whatever the truth of Bushnell's identity, her circumstances would certainly have been sufficient constraint; the case of another United States E-4 in a computing and intelligence role who forswore her career in favour of a tectonic act of moral conviction, Chelsea Manning, is illustrative in that regard. Other reasons trans people subsist on online expression might include a romantic relationship with a beloved but unaccepting partner; custody arrangements overseen by judicial authorities deeply unsympathetic to gender transition; simple visceral fear; and too many more to list here. Those cases establish that a gender which is expressed exclusively online is not necessarily less authentic or less real. A gender is real if it is real. The mere fact of its being confined to online expression is of no relevance to that determination.

Is it reasonable to interpret it as a stable *trans identity? What about gender exploration?*

It is certainly conceivable that Bushnell was exploring. However, she appeared to have been using a settled, stable preferred name in an increasing number of online contexts for the final 19 months of her life. I interpreted that as meaning that, while the features and details of Bushnell's self-understanding might indeed have been continuing to develop, certain core particulars – that preferred name among them – had been solidly established.

If Bushnell was Lilly, that doesn't mean she wasn't Aaron; she could have been both.

Very true. As discussed above, Bushnell may have had a sufficiently expansive gendered self-concept that both the gender she expressed online and the gender she expressed offline were fully integrated, fully embraced aspects of who she actually was. She might, for example, have been bigender or pangender. I did not interpret C1's remark that she was "gender fluid" as referring to the specific gender identity, but she could indeed have been literally genderfluid *stricto sensu* (insofar as any shared subjective experience can have a strict sense).

---

[123] (Austin, Craig, Navega, & McInroy, 2020)
[124] (Lapidot-Lefler & Barak, The benign online disinhibition effect, 2015)
[125] (Lapidot-Lefler & Barak, Effects of anonymity, 2012)
[126] (Holkins & Krahulik, 2004)
[127] (Suler, 2004)

What this would imply about Bushnell's relationship to her birth name and pronouns, and her relationship to the closet, is not clear on the data in my possession. From the dichotomy between the two identities, and the scrupulous textual separation between them – with barely even furtive acknowledgement of either by the other – I did have the impression that Bushnell felt herself to be closeted. However, this does not enable me to draw any detailed conclusions about how she thought of herself beyond those in the data. I know how she presented herself in public and how she presented herself in private. Who was she in the privacy of her own mind? I do not know. It is unclear to me whether it can be known.

However, virtually any, perhaps literally any, person assigned male at birth whose gender could admit of the name Lilly and the pronouns she/her would still have been a subject of transmisogyny; she would still have been constrained in the same ways in planning and executing her final act; and she would still deserve to be remembered as the whole person she was, not only the side of her that it was possible or pragmatic to show.

Those data could mean anything.

Virtually any data can be arranged to suit an infinite variety of interpretations according to the personal tastes and epistemic tolerances of the various interpreters. Should this report prove to be wildly off the mark in its conclusions, it will, if nothing else, serve as a paradigmatic case study in that regard. However, for most data in most contexts there will from time to time arise circumstances where one hypothesis suggests itself more readily than any alternative. Positioning transfemininity as an hypothesis of last resort, which can only be considered if a countably infinite and steadily growing number of other interpretations are first conclusively dismissed, does not bespeak rigour – it bespeaks transmisogyny, and very little else.

Ethics

I debated whether to include this section. Preemptive self-defence is rarely a good idea; one does not wish to protest too much. However, I felt that some of these ethical questions were genuinely substantial and pressing, and I do not know how many chances I will get. I have therefore opted to include it.

Isn't this transvestigation?

No.

You're spitting on the last wishes of a martyr.

The martyr in question appears to have left behind two conflicting sets of last wishes, both with an equal claim to being "last". I have reconciled them as best I can.

You just want to claim a hero.

I certainly cannot say that I would not benefit if what I have said here proves to be true. The maltreatment and marginalisation of trans people in the present day is justified in part by the broadly shared, carefully nurtured feeling that we are a novelty, an intrusion – one everyone knows was absent from the *real* history, the history which preceded the emergence of the tremendous powers of illusion of the present day.

Yet this absence is itself not accidental and it is often possible to directly observe the process by which it is maintained. Historians have woven steadily more tangled webs around the Chevalière d'Éon for centuries rather than admit the obvious.[128] Before her, there was R'

[128] (Ryan, 2018)

Kalonymus bat Kalonymus, who wrote the *Even Bokhan* (*Touchstone*) of 1322 and its "Prayer for transformation"[129] – one of the most piercingly, achingly transfeminine works I have ever read, and one explained away since at least 1900[130] and to my understanding since considerably earlier as "satire," notwithstanding that framing Kalonymus as simply an especially developed thirteenth-century satirist is like framing Warhol as simply an especially developed Caravaggio.[131] Before either of them, there was the Roman empress regnant Elagabalus, who demanded to be referred to as a woman[132] and expressed a desire for what was unmistakably medical transition[133] – yet her gender has been dismissed as an invention of hostile chroniclers,[134] even though those chroniclers would functionally have had to collectively invent the *DSM-5* rubric for gender dysphoria a millennium and a half ahead of time.

Since the constructed nature of this veil of ignorance is increasingly well-known, it is possible to puncture it, and it is in the trans community's interest to do so, as indeed – in the case of Elagabalus – it is being done. And if it is in the trans community's interest to claim Elagabalus, one of the most objectively incompetent, arbitrary, autocratic rulers Rome ever had, how much more so Bushnell, who I hope and believe will be recognised as a world-historical icon of moral clarity? Thus if Bushnell were one of us I cannot deny that it might be to our advantage. But I have not attempted to make her so.

You can't assign trans identity to someone who hasn't come out.

My decision to pursue this is based partly on the fact that it appeared to me that Bushnell had started to come out. This was neither a total lack of any indication of coming out, nor a coming out that had been abandoned. In my view, this was a coming out permanently interrupted by what the individual in question justifiably perceived to be historical necessity. If she was as I believe her to have been, then she was willing to accept the second death at the same time as the first – but being willing to accept something does not mean one should have to.

You're suggesting she was brave enough to kill herself, but not to come out.

If I were pursuing that line of argument it would be material that it is absolutely commonplace for trans people to be pressured to kill themselves rather than bring dishonour and shame down on their loved ones by coming out, that many succumb to that pressure, and that this is not because of a lack of courage on their part.

However, I am not pursuing that argument. If Bushnell was as I believe her to be, she had a strong strategic motive not to come out. Whether she was "brave enough to come out" or not is of no relevance. For the record, though, I believe that being willing to go in the cause of humanity not only to physical death, but to metaphysical annihilation, shows bravery both immense and heartbreaking.

If Bushnell wanted to die in the closet for Palestine, where do you get off outing her?

Bushnell died to demand that Palestine be freed. I was morally obliged before her death to see that end achieved; I am equally morally obliged now. Achieving the end sought by Bushnell and a whole people for generations before her logically requires believing it is possible to do so, and I do. Palestine will be free.

---

[129] (Kalonymus, 2018)
[130] (Chotzner, 1900)
[131] (Varady, 2023)
[132] (Rufo, 2023)
[133] (Burns, 2021)
[134] (Kenrick, 2023)

I am also obliged to honour and remember the dead as they were. Bushnell may have had a strategic motive to die as she did so that Palestine could be free. But on the day when Palestine is freed, Bushnell will still be dead, and my duty to her memory, among all the other martyrs', will be no less present or real than it is today.

If Bushnell used Palestine as pretext for a dysphoric suicide, doesn't that devalue her sacrifice?

Had I intended to suggest that she did that, I would have done so. I did not suggest that because I do not remotely believe that she did.

In the first place, I understood that we had spent a decade firmly establishing that one does not need dysphoria to be trans.[135] It follows that we cannot conclude Bushnell was dysphoric solely on the strength of even complete certainty that she was trans.

In the second place, if Bushnell did experience dysphoria, then, apart possibly from one extremely ambiguous reddit comment which also supports a cisgender reading,[136] she never discussed it in any source discoverable to me. While in the context of her career and circumstances this would have been understandable even if she experienced severe dysphoria, it means I have no evidence to support any assessment of how severely dysphoric she might have been, let alone the assessment that she was so severely dysphoric that it drove her desperately and unthinkingly to – and over – the brink of suicide (and suicide or not, "desperate and unthinking" is not a characterisation consistent with the exhaustive planning and calm execution of her final act).

In the third place, even if we unmoor ourselves entirely from the available evidence, and impute an absolutely miserable level of dysphoria to Bushnell based on no data whatsoever, it would not fundamentally change what we already know. The argument that it would is based on the contention that her political suicide would "count less" because trans people have such a legendarily high rate of suicide attempt in general – traditionally, as previously alluded to, 41%[137] (for reference, the rate in the general population is 5%[138]). From a certain point of view this does seem credible; a number that high gives the impression that trans people are somehow meant to die, and if Bushnell was always meant to die, how could it matter when and how she did?

Yet a double standard is at work here. Let's accept for the sake of argument that a high suicide rate does somehow signify a teleological drive toward death. In that case it is relevant, for example, that Bushnell said she had nonverbal learning disorder.[139] Though she explicitly did not consider herself autistic,[140] NVLD is a non-*DSM* condition for which the closest *DSM* proxies are autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and bipolar disorder.[141] The lifetime suicide attempt prevalences for these conditions are, respectively, 24.3%,[142] 14%,[143] and 32–36%.[144]

Further, in a comment on an r/Anarchy101 thread, "What specifically would you do in an ideal anarchist society that you can't do now?", Bushnell described a trauma burden that sounded absolutely crushing:

---

[135] (Earl, 2019)
[136] (Bushnell, If I had to choose …, 2023)
[137] (Tanis, 2016)
[138] (Kessler, Borges, & Walters, 1999)
[139] (Bushnell, Yes, I have Nonverbal Learning …, 2022)
[140] (Bushnell, Hi, I'm not autistic, just …, 2023)
[141] (Delgado, Wassenaar, & Strawn, 2011)
[142] (Newell, et al., 2023)
[143] (Fuller-Thomson, Rivière, Carrique, & Agbeyaka, 2020)
[144] (Novick, Swartz, & Frank, 2010)

Heal, from all the massive amounts of trauma from various sources. I can barely begin to heal under capitalism. I can't even imagine the person I could become and the things I could go on to do if I could just heal a year or two.[145]

The prevalence of suicide attempt among people with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is 27%.[146] Bushnell's description matches a specific subcategory of PTSD, complex PTSD (cPTSD), which arises from "exposure to sustained or multiple traumas from which escape is difficult or impossible".[147] The difference in suicidality between simple and complex PTSD is not so far well-characterised, but those findings that have been published indicate that cPTSD causes more severe general symptoms[148] and carries a higher risk of suicide.[149]

If we were sloppy and/or malicious, we could say that any of these comparably or equally rendered Bushnell "meant-to-die" – as, indeed, through the "mental illness" narrative, many people who inexplicably consider themselves journalists are trying to do.[150,151,152] Yet the narrative has not caught because we understand that, whatever Bushnell might herself have lived with, the character, content, and context of her protest demonstrate that it was singularly, invincibly rational. If she were miserably dysphoric that would not change one iota. If we were to find that she was trans and subsequently act on that finding by reassessing her decision as irrational, we would not be reflecting a fundamental truth of reality; we would be making a choice, and an unfounded one.

If Bushnell was a woman, all that means is that she was a woman – no more, no less.

Even if Bushnell's last gender ID was strategic and under duress, shouldn't we respect it?

As previously noted, Bushnell's last gender identification is one of (at least) two sets of directions about her gender issued by her that were in place at the time of her death, both of which could be argued to be "last". However, this would be circumventing the question, whereas I believe it is appropriate to examine it.

"Gender ID for strategic reasons under duress" has another name: the closet. We apply the rule of most recent identification on a day-to-day basis because in the vast majority of situations we will ever be in, it will produce the correct answer. But to accept that an identification becomes "canonical," so to speak, *solely because it is the most recent identification, to the exclusion of all other factors*, is not a rule we apply, nor ever have. It would mean, for example, that a closeted trans person could not be subject to transphobia because the mere act of remaining in the closet rendered them no longer trans.

The reality is that we accept an identification not only because it is delivered in the right form but because we understand it as a true expression of the person's self-determination. When we do not believe the second condition to be true we do not receive it in the same way. When our friend who was introduced to us as he/him suddenly and bluntly corrects us to she/her in the presence of his conservative parents, we comply to guarantee his safety and wellbeing, but we also know not to automatically afford that change of pronoun the preeminent authority which in any other situation we would.

---

[145] (Bushnell, Heal, from all the massive ..., 2022)
[146] (Cooper, Ticknor, & Kennedy, 2021)
[147] (Brewin, 2019)
[148] (Jannini, et al., 2023)
[149] (Pinheiro, et al., 2020)
[150] (Norton, 2024)
[151] (Antle, 2024)
[152] (Ponnuru, 2024)

Though the hypothetical ends are political and strategic rather than compassionate and protective, the same principle applies here, in however limited and conditional a form. Bushnell's self-determination credibly may have been interdicted here. We cannot say that it was with sufficient certainty to overrule her, because that would be both exceeding our authority and immoral even if she were alive. However, that it is substantially plausible means that the rule of recency alone cannot be enough to bring our inquiry to an end.

You think Bushnell's sacrifice matters more because you think he was a woman?

No. The difference is not in quantity but in kind. Assume we can cleanly separate Lilly (she/her) and Aaron (he/him). She was 25 and had an entire life ahead of her; so did he. She had friends and comrades she left behind, and 2 cats who will always wonder where she has gone; the same is no less true of him.

She chose to accept the first and second deaths at the same instant; but the second death will, eventually, come for him too. It cannot be avoided. Memories move and die with their owners. Books, and libraries, are burned or sink into the sea. Generations and centuries pass away. Deep time takes everything in the end.

Bushnell is no longer here, so I imagine the question of when this will happen is, to her, immaterial. But this does not relieve the living of the responsibilities that remain ours to fulfil. I still breathe, and Palestine is not yet free. While Bushnell's memory still survives, I can best honour it and her by helping, under Palestinian leadership, to bring that freedom about. Beyond that, the only difference in the care and respect she or he are owed is the difference between that due a sister and that due a brother, which I hope is to say: no difference at all.

If you think Bushnell died in the closet strategically, why the hell are you shouting about it?

Because to be quite frank I have no idea what the hell else to do. What I have is the public data Bushnell left behind. I cannot even be sure that anyone was meant to find it; I can only say that it seems even less plausible that Bushnell intended that nobody would find it, given where it was and that it was there. It seems unlikely that she forgot about it, but it seems inconceivable that if she remembered it was there, she, or he, fluent in signifiers of all kinds and especially this one, would not have understood the conclusions that might be drawn. But "plausible," "unlikely," and "inconceivable" all indicate conjecture, not fact. I cannot be dead certain when the only person who could have made anyone certain is dead.

If people were meant to find it, *when* were they meant to find it? I cannot begin to even hypothesise an answer; I have no data whatsoever. Throughout this inquiry, I and others have been gravely concerned that this work, should it come to public notice before the narrative has fully set, will be used to fuel the repellent fascist narrative that Bushnell's sacrifice was meaningless, that her death had no weight at all. I do not intend that in the least. And yet I am aware that my intent is not and will not be the only thing that matters, and my actions, even if they come from an understandable place, may have an impact far graver than I foresee.

But I also fear what will happen if I delay. Memory animates history, imbues it briefly with life. As memory fades, history ossifies. If I wait too long to say this, then even if it is as true as I believe it to be, it will not matter. If Bushnell meant or expected to say something with what she left behind, it will go unheard. At least, I will have failed to make it heard. Yet I cannot simply assume that if I fail in my task it will be taken up by someone more competent, or that a failure will occur in a way that allows anyone, however competent, to change the outcome.

I can only conclude that I must speak, and I must speak now, and hope fervently to be right.

If you're wrong, isn't that as bad as the very violence you're hoping to avoid?

A mechanistic big-picture analysis, ignoring the existence of human beings as individuals, would compel me to say no. Deadnaming and misgendering of trans dead is the final insult in a regime of systematic transphobic brutality to which trans people are subjected from cradle to grave. In a cisnormative society, the same practices inflicted on cis decedents do not represent the same degree of systematic harm.

However, I find that for better or worse I do not have the mettle for that line of argument. Human beings are not an undifferentiated medium for the propagation of social dynamics and historical forces – individuals exist and feel and matter. Misunderstanding the dead is still a harm even with no systematic involvement. Large-scale analysis or no, "any man's death diminishes me, for I am involved in mankind,"[153] and this is no less true for the second death than the first.

I will therefore offer this in my defence. To my understanding from the public statements of everyone who knew enough to speak, Bushnell was unfailingly and thoroughly compassionate, thoughtful, gentle, and kind. I must add my voice to the chorus and say that if Bushnell was a cisgender man, then, if his writing accurately reflects who he was, Aaron Bushnell was one of the most articulate, intelligent,[154] outspoken,[155] perceptive[156] feminist and transfeminist allies[157] I have personally ever seen, to the point that I felt an instant stab of sadness and regret upon realising who we had lost.

I am conscious of the risk of rhetorical puppetry of those who are no longer here to speak for themselves. I did not know Bushnell. I cannot say with any certainty what Bushnell might have wanted. I can only say that I *hope* that, if I have completely and thoroughly misunderstood him, she would have understood.

[153] (Donne, 1839)
[154] (Bushnell, The pot of dollars is ..., 2021)
[155] (Bushnell, No. Trans people have fought ..., 2021)
[156] (Bushnell, If people started misgendering you ..., 2023)
[157] (Bushnell, Where you get the emotional ..., 2021)

Conclusions

Findings of fact

Considering all of the above facts, I concluded that on the balance of probabilities, Bushnell most likely:

- used the name Lilly;
- used she/her pronouns;
- did so for the purpose of gender expression;
- did so up to the point of her death.

Next steps

In my judgment:

Practical

- Based on the precautionary principle, it is most likely appropriate to refer to Bushnell as Lilly (she/her), either exclusively or in addition to any other styles of reference;
- It is most likely *not* appropriate to correct people referring to her as Aaron (he/him), and it will not become appropriate unless additional information emerges which is not expected at this time.

Theoretical

- In the short term, I am refraining from proactively seeking out Bushnell's comrades and friends for additional information on this subject, and informally recommend that others do the same. This will change over time; however, at the date of this revision her loss is not yet one month old. While this is not a frivolous or insubstantial topic, I feel that any need to know on our part, even for the sake of historical accuracy and memorial obligation, must take a very clear second place to the need of those who loved her to process and grieve.
- However, there is an ongoing interest in ascertaining whether this report's conclusions are true or false. The same conclusions, emerging by this route and others, have already gained significant traction. Anybody who can speak to these conclusions with authority and chooses to do so ought to be welcomed. If possible, they should also be referred to me so I can update or take other action on this report as soon as possible; I have provided my contact details on the inside of the cover.

Closing

This report has been concerned, in the main, with Bushnell herself, her death, her legacy, and the implications and consequences thereof. It remains that she dedicated her passing to a cause. I do not have the authority to narrate that cause, nor will this document, whatever its effects, play a significant role in its outcome. However, as a fellow-traveller, I have a responsibility to end this report from Bushnell's martyrdom with the end for which she meant it.

By way of valediction, therefore, I will simply offer the following, and hope that the smallness of the words will underscore the magnitude of the emphasis with which they are intended:

May her memory be for an intifada.

Long live the Resistance.

Palestine will be free.

Notes

Further reading

On 6 March, prior to the publication of version 1 of this report, Assigned Media published "Aaron or LillyAnarKitty? The complicated identity of Aaron Bushnell," an interview by Evan Urquhart of me in relation to a preliminary version of these findings.[158]

Version history

I am expecting to publish a version 3 with a few items of additional data, including some currently awaiting consent clearance. I do not expect to publish additional versions after that.

Version 2.1. This version. Published 26 March 2024. Changes:

- Fixed minor typographical and formatting errors.
- Changed word order in 2 places without changes in meaning.

Version 2. Published 22 March 2024. Changes:

- Added explicit author contact details.
- Added Figure 3.
- Added "Closing remarks" and "Notes".
- Broadly revised text for clarity and effect without substantial changes in meaning.
- Corrected and improved formatting and typesetting. Added explicit author attribution, headers for version control, and page numbers.
- Corrected typographical errors.
- Moved epigraph.

Version 1. Original version. Published 13 March 2024.

[158] (Urquhart, 2024)

References

@admin@kolektiva.social. (2023, July 1). 🚨 *Kolektiva.social SECURITY ALERT* 🚨 *This is an alert for Kolektiva.social users. Please read this post in its entirety! in ...*. (submedia; Antimidia) Retrieved March 22, 2024, from Kolektiva: https://kolektiva.social/@admin/110637031574056150

@admin@kolektiva.social. (n.d.). *About*. (subMedia; Antimidia) Retrieved March 22, 2024, from Kolektiva: https://kolektiva.social/about

@emoatypwarrior. (2024, February 29). *it undermines the logic of imperial power, which works to secure and foster the life of white men like Bushnell ...* (X Corp.; Archive Today) Retrieved March 11, 2024, from Twitter: https://archive.md/vHo15

@zoesnotaposter. (2024, February 27). *well, i'm guessing based on having a twitch named "lillyanarkitty"*. (X Corp.) Retrieved March 13, 2024, from Twitter: https://twitter.com/zoesnotaposter/status/1762173045244903765

Antle, W. J. (2024, February 28). 'Burning man' Aaron Bushnell and the culture of death. *The American Conservative*. Retrieved March 22, 2024, from https://www.theamericanconservative.com/burning-man-aaron-bushnell-and-the-culture-of-death/

Austin, A., Craig, S. L., Navega, N., & McInroy, L. B. (2020, January 6). It's my safe space: The life-saving role of the internet in the lives of transgender and gender diverse youth. *International Journal of Transgender Health, 21*(1), 33–44. doi:10.1080/15532739.2019.1700202

Baryon, D. (2024, February 27). *Aaron Bushnell was a patron of the channel and posted several links to the Anark Discord server early yesterday. We ...* (X Corp.) Retrieved March 13, 2024, from Twitter: https://twitter.com/AnarkYouTube/status/1762200037277266288

Boostivy Ltd. (n.d.). *Twitch account age checker*. (Boostivy Ltd) Retrieved March 19, 2024, from Boostivy: https://boostivy.com/twitch-account-age-checker/

Bowcut, S. (2024, January 31). *Guide to a CompTIA Security+ certification*. Retrieved March 19, 2024, from Cybersecurity Guide: https://cybersecurityguide.org/programs/cybersecurity-certifications/security/

Boyle, A. (2012, July 25). *Why Sally Ride waited until her deateh to tell the world she was gay*. (Comcast Corporation) Retrieved March 11, 2024, from NBC News: https://www.nbcnews.com/sciencemain/why-sally-ride-waited-until-her-death-tell-world-she-908942

Brewin, C. R. (2019, August 8). Complex post-traumatic stress disorder: a new diagnosis in ICD-11. *BJPsych Advances, 26*(3), 145–152. doi:10.1192/bja.2019.48

Burns, O. (2021, February 18). *LGBTQIA+ History Month — Elagabalus, the trans emperor of Rome?* Retrieved March 13, 2024, from University of Birmingham: https://blog.bham.ac.uk/historybham/lgbtqia-history-month-elagabalus-the-trans-emperor-of-rome-ollie-burns/

Bushnell, L. (2013). Read the podcast credits. Orleans, Massachusetts, United States. Retrieved March 19, 2024, from https://soundcloud.com/acebush1/read-the-podcast-credits

Bushnell, L. (2020, January 14). *Still quiet. Kinda proud of it? I graduated 2016. While I have retained my quiet disposition, having to be an* ... (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 11, 2024, from r/AskReddit: https://reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/eo9yyw/former_quiet_kids_of_reddit_how_did_life_for_you/fecq65f/

Bushnell, L. (2020, April 8). *Yup. 21 y/o guy here, planning on waiting until I'm married.* (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 10, 2024, from r/Christianity: https://reddit.com/r/Christianity/comments/fwk2g8/does_anybody_ever_save_themselves_for_marriage/fmoyp8t/

Bushnell, L. (2021, March 9). *I 100% agree, it's a very childish thing to do. I worked at a landscaping company as a teenager, and* ... (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 10, 2024, from r/AirForce: https://reddit.com/r/AirForce/comments/m0nwmu/this_is_how_it_be_tho/gqan2e0/

Bushnell, L. (2021, August 15). *I read Riyria first, and loved it, then read Legends and loved it twice as much. Like others have said,* ... (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 13, 2024, from r/riyria: https://reddit.com/r/riyria/comments/oweb3x/unpopular_opinion_i_prefer_legends_much_more_to/h8zoiwx/

Bushnell, L. (2021, December 25). *I'm a male. Lol this has to be the most LEO thing about this post* 😂. (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 10, 2024, from r/cscareerquestions: https://reddit.com/r/cscareerquestions/comments/rno11n/deleted_by_user/hptja3b/

Bushnell, L. (2021, September 11). *I'm the son of a carpenter and somehow I still didn't know this*. (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 10, 2024, from r/nextfuckinglevel: https://reddit.com/r/nextfuckinglevel/comments/pln838/this_is_why_the_end_of_a_tape_measure_moving_a/hcct7kn/

Bushnell, L. (2021, June 22). *No. I'm really angry. I feel majorly disappointed in my service branch. I thought we* ... (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 11, 2024, from Reddit: https://reddit.com/r/AirForce/comments/o51bp0/want_to_make_sure_change_never_happens_and_your/h2ke9pt/

Bushnell, L. (2021, June 22). *No. Trans people have fought tooth and nail for the right to exist in this country. They have fought and* ... (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 13, 2024, from r/AirForce: https://reddit.com/r/AirForce/comments/o51bp0/want_to_make_sure_change_never_happens_and_your/h2kay8u/

Bushnell, L. (2021, June 22). *This is not how it works. No one's medical treatments are getting denied because "oops we ran out of money."* ... (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 13, 2024, from r/AirForce: https://reddit.com/r/AirForce/comments/o51bp0/want_to_make_sure_change_never_happens_and_your/h2l6zn7/

Bushnell, L. (2021, August 15). *Where you get the emotional energy to do this I do not know. Fuckin hardcore. I hope to be like* ... (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 13, 2024, from r/AirForce: https://reddit.com/r/AirForce/comments/p4gs33/gender_transition_in_the_air_force/h8zsy29/

Bushnell, L. (2021, December 4). *Why do you have to shit on female eyelash extensions? It's not like they're scraping the hair off your face* ... (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 10, 2024, from r/AirForce: https://reddit.com/r/AirForce/comments/r897ef/afi_362903_for_3_december_21/hn70gft/

Bushnell, L. (2022, January 5). *From what I understand, women are also vulnerable to groin attacks*. (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 10, 2024, from r/funny: https://reddit.com/r/funny/comments/rw0pt8/how_to_win_a_fight/hrawgv3/

Bushnell, L. (2022, December 31). *Heal, from all the massive amounts of trauma from various sources. I can barely begin to heal under capitalism. I* ... (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 13, 2024, from r/Anarchy101: https://reddit.com/r/Anarchy101/comments/zyxpi5/what_specifically_would_you_do_in_an_ideal/j2cmkt0/

Bushnell, L. (2022, November 27). *I am a cis man and proud of my feminine archetype.* (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 10, 2024, from r/infp: https://reddit.com/r/infp/comments/z54nxi/male_infp_misfit/ixwz5hx/

Bushnell, L. (2022, September 29). *I honestly learned this from Netflix gangster TV shows. Thinking back, they probably did more to radicalize me into Anarchism* ... (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 21, 2024, from r/COMPLETEANARCHY: https://reddit.com/r/COMPLETEANARCHY/comments/xpjcon/daily_reminder_that_cops_are_just_the_biggest_gang/iqaobjx/

Bushnell, L. (2022, December 28). *I just took a dive into that channel and it's full of red flags. They use very high production value* ... (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 10, 2024, from r/privacy: https://reddit.com/r/privacy/comments/zwkvs7/discord_collects_and_keeps_a_dangerous_amount_of/j1w8boe/

Bushnell, L. (2022, December 15). *I was there, it was a blast. AFAIK the drag event went off without a hitch. I've been very proud* ... (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 22, 2024, from r/AntifascistsofReddit: https://reddit.com/r/AntifascistsofReddit/comments/zltn94/antifascists_vastly_outnumbered_the_pathetic/j08kzse/

Bushnell, L. (2022, September 10). *I would encourage you to read/look into anarchist practices, they're very practical and offer some of the most immediate and* ... (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 19, 2024, from r/ClassConscienceMemes: https://reddit.com/r/ClassConscienceMemes/comments/xa25k0/true_story/insrhx6/

Bushnell, L. (2022, September 16). *I'm just reading these as a dude and asking myself how prepared I am to speak up if I see* ... (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 10, 2024, from Reddit:

https://reddit.com/r/cscareerquestions/comments/xf42k9/girls_share_your_horror_stories_of_working_in_tech/iomma7g/

Bushnell, L. (2022, February 8). *I'm not a woman and I'm no expert in these things, but I have a couple thoughts. It seems like …* (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 10, 2024, from r/cscareerquestions: https://reddit.com/r/cscareerquestions/comments/smypij/women_developers_how_did_pregnancy_and_maternity/hw2aygu/

Bushnell, L. (2022, November 4). *IMCMO (In My Cis Male Opinion)… They are asking literally the exact opposite question that they should be asking. They …* (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 10, 2024, from r/girlsgonewired: https://reddit.com/r/girlsgonewired/comments/ykfh2e/interview_question_as_a_woman_do_you_think_youll/iuwi6ht/

Bushnell, L. (2022, December 23). *Is there a way to search for a specific instance to join on desktop/web? Or is that only possible in …* (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 11, 2024, from r/Mastodon: https://reddit.com/r/Mastodon/comments/zssw0d/psa_new_to_mastodon_confused_please_read_this/j1a2tq4/

Bushnell, L. (2022, December 22). *Lilly*. (Antimidia; subMedia; Archive Today) Retrieved March 11, 2024, from Kolektiva: https://archive.md/r2xq3

Bushnell, L. (2022, July 27). *Lilly*. (Alphabet, Inc.) Retrieved March 11, 2022, from YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/@lillyanarkitty

Bushnell, L. (2022, July 27). *Lilly*. (Alphabet, Inc.; Internet Archive) Retrieved March 11, 2022, from YouTube: https://web.archive.org/web/20220727045902/youtube.com/channel/UCL5p7u6wfBh74cYgcHnBrSA

Bushnell, L. (2022, May 10). *Love to see some visibility for female Souls players! Hope you continue to become a bigger part of the community …* (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 11, 2024, from reddit: https://reddit.com/r/Eldenring/comments/ulqimg/no_love_for_female_simps/i7xkwnl/

Bushnell, L. (2022, September 16). *Not a woman but just wanted to say I respect the username*. (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 10, 2024, from r/cscareerquestions: https://reddit.com/r/cscareerquestions/comments/xf42k9/girls_share_your_horror_stories_of_working_in_tech/iomjssg/

Bushnell, L. (2022, June 18). *Same! I actually had a conversation with some friends in a very woman-dominated fandom Discord when I realized how I …* (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 11, 2024, from Reddit: https://reddit.com/r/BreadTube/comments/vedhab/bbc_transphobia_part_4_the_ecu_response/icr85ig/

Bushnell, L. (2022, December 19). *Solidarity from San Antonio. We defended a drag show from the fash earlier this week. Hope your event went smoothly …* (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 13, 2024, from r/SocialistRA:

https://reddit.com/r/SocialistRA/comments/zpaq0w/after_the_pbs_showed_up_to_a_drag_brunch_in/j0t9zxx/

Bushnell, L. (2022, September 2). *sweats in cis male insecurity*. (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 10, 2024, from r/korrasami: https://reddit.com/r/korrasami/comments/x30a08/i_wrote_korrasami_fanfic_when_i_was_17/impx9vn/

Bushnell, L. (2022, November 9). *This is misogynist bullshit. The guy's basic premise, that "Men aRe tAuGht TO mAKE WomeN HAPpY", is an obvious lie, ...* (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 10, 2024, from Reddit: https://reddit.com/r/BillBurr/comments/ypuar9/these_broads_today/ivmr3mk/

Bushnell, L. (2022, November 25). *Wut? ... No place, and I mean no place ever, has sucked as much as the USA. Defending capitalism because no ...* (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 19, 2024, from r/VuvuzelaIPhone: https://reddit.com/r/VuvuzelaIPhone/comments/z3m0l1/literally_1984/ixp7qfy/

Bushnell, L. (2022, October 2). *Yes, I have Nonverbal Learning Disorder, which I've always seen as the main cause of the behaviors you described.* (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 13, 2024, from r/infp: https://reddit.com/r/infp/comments/xsjmkk/are_your_social_skills_a_bit_off/iqmpmzt/

Bushnell, L. (2023, June 12). *Because they act like they don't bleed like I do. The Air Force treats them like they don't bleed like ...* (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 19, 2024, from r/AirForce: https://reddit.com/r/AirForce/comments/146b2vi/interacting_with_officers/jnsbxfj/

Bushnell, L. (2023, March 20). *Hey so I'm not the comedian in the post (just belatedly credited them after realizing this blew up 😅). But ....* (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 10, 2024, from r/standupshots: https://reddit.com/r/standupshots/comments/11vd8pe/its_funny_because_acab/jcvqsw3/

Bushnell, L. (2023, February 11). *Hi, I'm not autistic, just a neurodivergent lurker, so I'm sorry if this is inappropriate. But my brother is heavily ...* (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 13, 2024, from r/AutisticPride: https://reddit.com/r/AutisticPride/comments/10y3u42/autistics_rejoice_i_get_to_give_a_speech_on_911/j80331p/

Bushnell, L. (2023, January 30). *Honestly I've been blabbing about it to whoever's interested and reading Anarchist literature at work and somehow I still have ...* (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 19, 2024, from r/AirForce: https://reddit.com/r/AirForce/comments/10on0qz/gotta_get_my_rage_against_the_machine_fix_with_my/j6gj657/

Bushnell, L. (2023, March 29). *If I had to choose one, I'd go with not having to shave. And I only have to shave twice ...* (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 13, 2024, from r/AirForce: https://reddit.com/r/AirForce/comments/124nao4/unpopular_opinion_screw_beards_i_want_to_be_able/je3jgbl/

Bushnell, L. (2023, April 5). *If people started misgendering you and discriminating against you and ostracizing you from community and making it illegal to give …* (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 13, 2024, from r/lostgeneration: https://reddit.com/r/lostgeneration/comments/12bwnm8/and_even_then_they_dont_care/jf1hi2j/

Bushnell, L. (2024, February 26). *Aaron Bushnell (In remembrance)*. Retrieved March 11, 2024, from Archive Today: https://archive.md/A4keK

Cameron, D. (2022, November 8). New to Mastodon? Here's how to DM like a pro. *Gizmodo*. Retrieved March 11, 2024, from https://gizmodo.com/mastodon-how-to-dm-send-messages-twitter-1849759852

Campbell, M. (2017, December 8). *Meaning, origin and history of the name Lilly*. Retrieved March 22, 2024, from Behind the Name: https://www.behindthename.com/name/lilly

Canbolat, U. (2024). *Instant username search*. (Umut Canbolat) Retrieved March 19, 2024, from InstantUsername.com: https://instantusername.com/#/

Chotzner, J. (1900, October). Kalonymos ben Kalonymos, a thirteenth-century satirist. *The Jewish Quarterly Review, 13*(1), 128–146. doi:10.2307/1450670

Cleary, T. (2022, December 2). *Willem Van Spronsen aka Emma Durutti: 5 Fast Facts You Need to Know*. Retrieved March 11, 2024, from heavy.: https://heavy.com/news/2019/07/willem-van-spronsen-emma-durutti/

Cooper, D. B., Ticknor, C., & Kennedy, J. (2021). Posttraumatic stress disorder. In B. C. Eapen, & D. X. Cifu, *Brain injury medicine: Board review* (1st ed., pp. 268–271). Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States: Elsevier, Inc. Retrieved March 12, 2024

CrimethInc Ex-Workers' Collective. (2019, July 14). *On Willem van Spronsen's action against the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma*. (CrimethInc Ex-Workers' Collective) Retrieved March 19, 2024, from CrimethInc: https://crimethinc.com/2019/07/14/on-willem-van-spronsens-action-against-the-northwest-detention-center-in-tacoma-including-the-full-text-of-his-final-statement

CrimethInc Ex-Workers' Collective. (2024, February 26). *"This is what our ruling class has decided will be normal": On Aaron Bushnell's action in solidarity with Gaza*. Retrieved March 11, 2024, from CrimethInc.: https://crimethinc.com/2024/02/26/this-is-what-our-ruling-class-has-decided-will-be-normal-on-aaron-bushnells-action-in-solidarity-with-gaza#fn:1

CrimethInc Ex-Workers' Collective. (2024, February 29). *Memories of Aaron Bushnell: As recounted by his friends*. Retrieved March 11, 2024, from CrimethInc: https://crimethinc.com/2024/02/29/memories-of-aaron-bushnell-as-recounted-by-his-friends

Crimmins, T. (2024, February 28). Reddit posts highlight Aaron Bushnell's support for Palestine—don't show he called for death to all Jews. *Daily Dot*. Retrieved March 22, 2024, from https://www.dailydot.com/debug/aaron-bushnell-reddit/

Davies, E., Hermann, P., & Lamothe, D. (2024, February 27). Airman who set self on fire grew up on religious compound, had anarchist past. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved March 11,

2024, from https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2024/02/26/israeli-embassy-airman-fire-death-gaza/

de Guzman, C. (2024, February 26). U.S. serviceman dies after setting self on fire outside Israeli Embassy to protest war in Gaza. *TIME*. Retrieved March 11, 2024, from https://time.com/6821425/israel-embassy-air-force-protest-fire-self-immolation-aaron-bushnell-latest-updates/

Delgado, S. V., Wassenaar, E., & Strawn, J. R. (2011, May). Does your patient have a psychiatric illness or nonverbal learning disorder? *Current Psychiatry, 10*(5), 17–36. Retrieved March 13, 2024, from https://www.mdedge.com/psychiatry/article/64319/schizophrenia-other-psychotic-disorders/does-your-patient-have-psychiatric

Discord. (2024, February 16). *How Discord works with law enforcement*. (Discord, Inc.) Retrieved March 11, 2024, from Discord.com: https://discord.com/safety/360044157931-working-with-law-enforcement

DJ Muel. (2024, March 1). *Aaron/Lilly used He/She pronouns in our community. that is how she wanted to be referred and that is how i …* (Bluesky Social, PBC) Retrieved March 13, 2024, from Bluesky: https://bsky.app/profile/djmuel.bsky.social/post/3kmn4k34u242s

DJ Muel. (2024, February 29). *What can we do against monsters?* (Patreon, Inc.) Retrieved March 11, 2024, from Patreon: https://www.patreon.com/posts/what-can-we-do-99384971

Donne, J. (1839). Meditation XVII. Nunc lento sonitu dicunt, morieris. In J. Donne, & H. Alford (Ed.), *The works of John Donne* (Vol. 3, pp. 574–575). John W. Parker. Retrieved March 13, 2024, from https://www.luminarium.org/sevenlit/donne/meditation17.php

Duck-Chong, E. (n.d.). *Am I trans enough?* (ACON Health Ltd) Retrieved March 13, 2024, from TransHub: https://www.transhub.org.au/am-i-trans-enough

Earl, J. (2019, January 18). Do you need gender dysphoria to be trans? *Advocate*. Retrieved March 13, 2024, from https://www.advocate.com/commentary/2019/1/18/do-you-need-gender-dysphoria-be-trans

Etherington, D. (2019, December 11). Twitter will now preserve JPEG quality for photo uploads on teh web. *TechCrunch*. Retrieved March 22, 2024, from https://techcrunch.com/2019/12/11/twitter-will-now-preserve-jpeg-quality-for-photo-uploads-on-web/

Everfree, A. (2023, September 9). *Ephemerality in the land of federation*. Retrieved March 13, 2024, from artemis.sh: https://artemis.sh/2023/09/09/ephemerality-in-the-land-of-federation.html

Forever Wingman. (n.d.). *1D7X1 — Cyber defense operations AFSC*. Retrieved March 19, 2024, from https://foreverwingman.com/career_fields/1d7x1-cyber-defense-operations-afsc/

Forever Wingman. (2021, April). *3D1X1 — Client systems AFSC*. Retrieved March 13, 2024, from https://foreverwingman.com/career_fields/3d1x1-client-systems/

Fuller-Thomson, E., Rivière, R. N., Carrique, L., & Agbeyaka, S. (2020, December 21). The dark side of ADHD: Factors associated with suicide attempts among those with ADHD in a national representative Canadian sample. *Archives of Suicide Research, 26*(3), 1122–1140. doi:10.1080/13811118.2020.1856258

Google LLC. (n.d.). *Delete or hide your YouTube channel*. (Alphabet, Inc.) Retrieved March 20, 2024, from YouTube Help: https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/55759?hl=en

Google LLC. (n.d.). *Google Search*. (Alphabet, Inc.) Retrieved March 19, 2024, from Google.com: https://google.com/

Google LLC. (n.d.). *How Google handles government requests for user information*. (Alphabet, Inc.) Retrieved March 11, 2024, from Google.com: https://policies.google.com/terms/information-requests?hl=en-US

Hall, C. (2023, July 26). Why Kolektiva.social is a cautionary tale for activists using Mastodon. *FOSS Force*. Retrieved March 22, 2024, from https://fossforce.com/2023/07/why-kolektiva-social-is-a-cautionary-tale-for-activists-using-mastodon/

Harris, S. (2021, December 3). *When and why you should use different usernames online*. Retrieved March 11, 2024, from 1Password: https://blog.1password.com/when-to-use-random-usernames-online/

Holkins, J., & Krahulik, M. (2004, March 19). *Green blackboards (and other anomalies)*. (Penny Arcade, Inc.) Retrieved March 13, 2024, from Penny Arcade: https://www.penny-arcade.com/comic/2004/03/19/green-blackboards-and-other-anomalies

Hollister, A. (2022, February 8). On Jorts: The labor cat. *OnLabor*. Retrieved March 12, 2024, from https://onlabor.org/on-jorts-the-labor-cat/

How to delete a Discord account. (2023, April 28). *IONOS Digital Guide*. Retrieved March 20, 2024, from https://www.ionos.com/digitalguide/server/know-how/delete-discord-account/

IDCrawl LLC. (2024). *Free people search engine — IDCrawl*. (IDCrawl, LLC) Retrieved March 19, 2024, from IDCrawl: https://idcrawl.com/

Jane, T. (2024, February 29). Aaron Bushnell's self-immolation protest needed to be seen. But that didn't make it easy to report. *Rolling Stone*. Retrieved March 22, 2024, from https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-commentary/aaron-bushnell-self-immolation-protest-hard-important-story-journalist-1234978325/

Jannini, T. B., Longo, L., Rossi, R., Niolu, C., Siracusano, A., & Di Lorenzo, G. (2023, September). Complex post-traumatic stress disorder (cPTSD) and suicide risk: A multigroup mediation analysis exploring the role of post-traumatic symptomatology on hopelessness. *Journal of Psychiatric Research, 165*, 165–169. doi:10.1016/j.jpsychires.2023.07.032

Kalonymus, K. b. (2018, October 11). Prayer for transformation, from the poem “Even Boḥan” by Rabbi Ḳalonymus ben Ḳalonymus ben Meir (1322 C.E.). *Open Siddur Project*. (A. N. Varady, S. Greenberg, Eds., A. N. Varady, N. Krakauer, & I. G. Mayer, Trans.) Retrieved March 13, 2024, from Open Siddur Project: https://opensiddur.org/prayers/civic-calendar/international-civil-calendar/transgender-day-of-visibility/prayer-of-kalonymus-from-sefer-even-bohan-1322/

Kenrick, A. (2023, November 28). *Museum classifies Roman emperor as trans — but modern labels oversimplify ancient gender identities*. (The Conversation Media Group Ltd) Retrieved March 13, 2024, from The Conversation:

https://theconversation.com/museum-classifies-roman-emperor-as-trans-but-modern-labels-oversimplify-ancient-gender-identities-218643

Kessler, R. C., Borges, G., & Walters, E. E. (1999, July). Prevalence of and risk factors for lifetime suicide attempts in the National Comorbidity Survey. *Archives of General Psychiatry, 56*(7), 617–626. doi:10.1001/archpsyc.56.7.617

Kube, C., Lenthang, M., & Siemaszko, C. (2024, February 27). *U.S. Air Force member who set himself on fire outside Israeli Embassy in D.C. has died*. (Comcast Corporation) Retrieved March 22, 2024, from NBC News: https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/us-air-force-member-set-fire-israeli-embassy-dc-died-rcna140455

Lapidot-Lefler, N., & Barak, A. (2012, March). Effects of anonymity, invisibility, and lack of eye-contact on toxic online disinhibition. *Computers in Human Behavior, 28*(2), 434–443. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2011.10.014

Lapidot-Lefler, N., & Barak, A. (2015). The benign online disinhibition effect: Could situational factors induce self-disclosure and prosocial behaviors? *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace, 9*(2). doi:10.5817/CP2015-2-3

Lennard, N. (2023, May 4). Texas GOP opens up a new front in genocidal anti-trans campaign. *The Intercept*. Retrieved March 10, 2024, from https://theintercept.com/2023/05/04/texas-republicans-anti-trans/

LillyAnarKitty [Internet Archive]. (2024, February 26). *Aaron Bushnell self-immolation*. (Internet Archive; Archive Today) Retrieved March 19, 2024, from Internet Archive: https://archive.is/RUgp6

LolArchiver. (n.d.). *General terms and conditions*. (LolArchiver) Retrieved March 19, 2024, from LolArchiver: https://lolarchiver.com/tos

LolArchiver. (n.d.). *Privacy*. (LolArchiver) Retrieved March 19, 2024, from LolArchiver: https://lolarchiver.com/privacy

LolArchiver. (n.d.). *Twitch Tools*. (LolArchiver) Retrieved March 19, 2024, from LolArchiver: https://twitch-tools.lolarchiver.com/

Mastodon gGmbH. (2023, December 7). *Moving or leaving accounts*. Retrieved March 19, 2024, from joinMastodon.org: https://docs.joinmastodon.org/user/moving/

Mazurov, N. (2024, February 28). Aaron Bushnell, who self-immolated for Palestine, had grown deeply disillusioned with the military. *The Intercept*. Retrieved March 11, 2024, from https://theintercept.com/2024/02/28/aaron-bushnell-reddit-fire-protest-israel-palestine/

McAllister, S. (2024, February 29). *I'm not sure how much people are talking about Aaron Bushnell having engaged with online leftist media, but the records …* (Automattic, Inc.) Retrieved March 11, 2024, from Tumblr: https://www.tumblr.com/sophie-frm-mars/743650708170080256/in-the-land-of-burning-children

McMinimee, S. M. (2019, July 15). *Will self-identified as a cis male. This is a conversation had as recently as 2 weeks ago. He used a …* (X Corp.) Retrieved March 13, 2024, from Twitter: https://twitter.com/SMMcMinimee/status/1150529703691706368

Morrow, A. (2022, February 17). *How a beloved orange tabby cat became a voice for America's union workers*. (Warner Bros. Discovery, Inc.) Retrieved March 13, 2024, from CNN Business: https://edition.cnn.com/2022/02/17/business/jorts-cat-unions-labor-movement/index.html

Nerrix Solutions. (n.d.). *Unofficial Discord lookup*. (Nerrix Solutions) Retrieved March 19, 2024, from Discord.id: https://discord.id/

Newell, V., Phillips, L., Jones, C., Townsend, E., Richards, C., & Cassidy, S. (2023, March 15). A systematic review and meta-analysis of suicidality in autistic and possibly autistic people without co-occurring intellectual disability. *Molecular Autism, 14*, 12. doi:10.1186/s13229-023-00544-7

Norton, T. (2024, February 26). Aaron Bushnell death report reveals police call about 'mental distress'. *Newsweek*. Retrieved March 22, 2024, from https://www.newsweek.com/aaron-bushnell-death-report-reveals-police-call-about-mental-distress-1873386

Novick, D. M., Swartz, H. A., & Frank, E. (2010, January 24). Suicide attempts in bipolar I and bipolar II disorder: a review and meta-analysis of the evidence. *Bipolar Disorders, 12*(1), 1–9. doi:10.1111/j.1399-5618.2009.00786.x

Phylaxis, A. (2024, February 28). *yeah. i've been wondering since hearing the name of the twitch channel*. (X Corp.) Retrieved March 13, 2024, from Twitter: https://twitter.com/quatoria/status/1762517730693894496

Pinheiro, M., Mendes, D., Mendes, T., Pais, J., Cabral, T., & Rocha, J. C. (2020, March 23). Importance of C-PTSD symptoms and suicide attempt. *European Psychiatry, 33*(S1), S215. doi:10.1016/j.eurpsy.2016.01.523

Ponnuru, R. (2024, March 3). Aaron Bushnell was not a martyr. *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. Retrieved March 22, 2024, from https://www.post-gazette.com/opinion/insight/2024/03/03/ponnuru-aaron-bushnell-palestine-suicide/stories/202403030065

Praat, J., mashirozx, ClearlyClaire, Tarawneh, A., Packbat, phseiff, . . . Carlson, I. (2024, March 12). *Feature request: Make it possible to change a username (#15320)*. (GitHub, Inc.) Retrieved March 13, 2024, from GitHub: mastodon: https://github.com/mastodon/mastodon/issues/15320

Puchalsky, R. (2024, March 2). *They certainly used "@LillyAnarKitty@kolektiva.social". But there was a similar claim when Willem Van Spronsen was killed: he had gone by …* (Bluesky, PBLLC) Retrieved March 11, 2024, from Bluesky; Archive Today: https://archive.md/JYwcc

Raphen, S. (2019, July 15). *There is a facebook for Emma Durutti, with a first post specifying that her deadname was will van spronsen using …* (Twitter, Inc.) Retrieved March 19, 2024, from Twitter: https://twitter.com/workingdog_/status/1150509031892639744

Regulation (EU) 2106/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 … (General Data Protection Regulation). (2016, May 4). *Official Journal of the European Union, L*(119). Retrieved March 19, 2024, from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016R0679

Riedel, S. (2022, April 14). The Air Force is offering to relocate families impacted by anti-trans laws. *them*. Retrieved March 22, 2022, from https://www.them.us/story/air-force-relocating-families-anti-trans-laws

Roza, D. (2024, February 27). Air Force identifies airman who died in self-immolation at Israeli Embassy. *Air & Space Forces Magazine*. Retrieved March 11, 2024, from https://www.airandspaceforces.com/air-force-aaron-bushnell-self-immolation/

Rufo, Y. (2023, November 21). *Museum reclassifies Roman emperor as trans woman*. (British Broadcasting Corporation) Retrieved March 13, 2024, from BBC News: https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-67484645

Rummler, O. (2023, January 11). *'They're erased': When trans people are misgendered after death, the consequences extend beyond paper*. Retrieved March 11, 2024, from The 19th: https://19thnews.org/2023/01/trans-people-misgendering-death-certificates/

Ryan, H. (2018, April 9). themstory: How this 18th century French spy came out as trans. *them*. Retrieved March 13, 2024, from them: https://www.them.us/story/chevalier-d-eon-trans-woman

Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs. (2022, March 24). *Resources available for DAF members, families affected by local laws*. (Defense Media Activity) Retrieved March 22, 2024, from United States Space Force: https://www.spaceforce.mil/News/Article/2977004/resources-available-for-daf-members-families-affected-by-local-laws/

Shankar, L. (2022, January 25). How two cats, Jean and Jorts, are using their viral success as a weapon for good. *Screenshot*. Retrieved March 22, 2024, from https://screenshot-media.com/culture/internet-culture/jean-and-jorts-saga/

Sissons, B. (2023, December 19). *What does it mean to be genderfluid?* (F. Kuehnle, Editor, & Healthline Media UK Ltd) Retrieved March 13, 2024, from MedicalNewsToday: https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/genderfluid

Stieb, M. (2024, March 5). What we know about the man who self-immolated in front of the Israeli embassy. *New York Magazine*. Retrieved March 19, 2024, from https://nymag.com/intelligencer/article/aaron-bushnell-self-immolation-what-we-know.html

strawberry-crocodile. (2024, March 9). *frankly the idea that Twitch usee LillyAnarKitty could have been anything but transfem feels generous, like I actually cannot think …* (Automattic, Inc.) Retrieved March 26, 2024, from Tumblr: https://strawberry-crocodile.tumblr.com/post/744497749121236992/frankly-the-idea-that-twitch-usee-lillyanarkitty

Suler, J. (2004, July 28). The online disinhibition effect. *CyberPsychology & Behavior, 7*(3), 321–326. doi:10.1089/1094931041291295

Swanson, A. (2015, June 3). Chart: The most liberal and conservative jobs in America. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved March 10, 2024, from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/06/03/why-your-flight-attendant-is-probably-a-democrat/

Tanis, J. (2016). The power of 41%: A glimpse into the life of a statistic. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 86*(4), 373–377. doi:10.1037/ort0000200

Tinsley, O. N. (2016, June 14). Bobby Brown has no business discussing Whitney Houston's sexuality. *Time*. Retrieved March 11, 2024, from https://time.com/4364725/bobby-brown-whitney-houston-sexuality/

Twitch Interactive. (n.d.). *Delete my Twitch account*. (Amazon.com, Inc.) Retrieved March 19, 2024, from https://help.twitch.tv/s/article/delete-twitch-account?language=en_US

Twitch. (n.d.). *Law enforcement response*. (Twitch Interactive, Inc.) Retrieved March 11, 2024, from https://safety.twitch.tv/s/article/Law-Enforcement-Response?language=en_US

u/throwawayorangecat. (2021, December 14). *AITA for "perpetuating ethnic stereotypes" about Jorts?* (Reddit, Inc.) Retrieved March 13, 2024, from r/AmItheAsshole: https://www.reddit.com/r/AmItheAsshole/comments/rfwgmc/aita_for_perpetuating_ethnic_stereotypes_about/

Urquhart, E. (2024, March 6). *Aaron or LillyAnarKitty? The complicated identity of Aaron Bushnell*. Retrieved March 22, 2024, from Assigned Media: https://www.assignedmedia.org/breaking-news/bushnell-gaza-immolation-protest-trans-identity

USAF Sixteenth Air Force. (n.d.). *70th ISR Wing*. (Defense Media Activity) Retrieved March 21, 2024, from Sixteenth Air Force (Air Forces Cyber): https://www.16af.af.mil/About-Us/Unit-Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/1962987/70th-isr-wing/

Ussher, J. M. (2020). The madness of women: Myth and experience. In D. McCallum (Ed.), *The Palgrave handbook of the history of human sciences.* Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan. doi:10.1007/978-981-15-4106-3_34-1

van Spronsen, A. (2019). I was a girl [Recorded by van Spronsen, Willem]. On *The audio manifesto*. D. Kelly. Retrieved March 19, 2024, from https://archive.org/details/emma-durutti---the-audio-manifesto/03+i+was+a+girl.mp3

Varady, A. N. (2023, January 23). *That this piece by Kalonymus is entirely satirical is the traditional explanation given for it. (Find J. Chotzner's 'Kalonymos ben …* Retrieved March 13, 2024, from Open Siddur Project: https://opensiddur.org/prayers/civic-calendar/international-civil-calendar/transgender-day-of-visibility/prayer-of-kalonymus-from-sefer-even-bohan-1322/

Visaggio, M. (2024, February 27). *rest in power, lillyanarkitty I see you*. (X Corp.) Retrieved March 13, 2024, from Twitter: https://twitter.com/MagsVisaggs/status/1762207075596189743

von Oldershausen, S. (2024, March 13). Friends of Aaron Bushnell, who self-immolated to protest violence in Gaza, remember a devoted helper. *Texas Monthly*. Retrieved March 19, 2024, from https://www.texasmonthly.com/news-politics/san-antonio-friends-remember-aaron-bushnell/

Xanthippe. (2019, May 8). *Disgruntled Catgirl in: "Moment of impact"*. Retrieved March 13, 2024, from Comics by Xan: https://comicsbyxan.com/comic/disgruntled-catgirl-in-moment-of-impact/